

A CHURCH YARD STORY

BY

B. CARRADINE





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BY

B. CARRADINE

Author of

"Pen Pictures," "Pastoral Sketches," "Remarkable Occurrences," etc., etc,



CHICAGO

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
A CHURCH YARD STORY	7
THE BALLANTYNES	77
A STRANGE HOMESTEAD	123
JUDGE DALRYMPLE	155
THE TWO CRONIES	207

PREFACE.

These stories were written several years ago by the author partly for mental recreation, and partly in loving remembrance of his native State, the great Commonwealth of Mississippi.

The sites of the stories are laid in four counties of the State; fully as many social planes of the people are made to appear in the narratives; while characters, dialects, customs and conditions, both of the past and present, are preserved in a form that we believe the reader will heartily approve and enjoy.

The writer, though now living in a far distant city from the place of his birth, yet cannot forget nor cease to value, the land and home of such men as Jefferson Davis, S. S. Prentiss, Walker Brooke, L. Q. C. Lamar, W. P. Harris, C. K. Marshall, Chas. B. Galloway, Robert Lowry, J. S. Williams and a perfect constellation besides of brilliant men and women who have made their own State famous as well as themselves immortal by words and deeds that are monumental and imperishable.

It is with a pardonable pride, then, and an abiding affection that this volume is dedicated to the people of Mississippi by the

AUTHOR.

St. Louis, Mo., May, 1904.

A CHURCH YARD STORY

A Church Yard Story

A few years ago, one afternoon in May, I was riding on horseback through a portion of the State of Mississippi, that before the war was considered one of its garden spots. I was directing my course to the town of Medfield, the center of this formerly rich and cultivated region. I had heard when a boy of the great plantations of this county, with their billowy crops of corn and cotton; of the palatial homes situated in noble groves, and visible miles away; and of the finely kept roads bordered with the beautiful Cherokee hedge, which traversed the country in every direction.

Here I was at last in this famous region; but seen under such changed conditions that the eyes grew misty, and the heart melancholy with the contrast. The noble old Southern mansions were either in ruins, partly occupied, or shut up entirely, while an unkempt air manifest, even from the road, declared the absence or death of the former owners. The fields stretching on all sides to distant lines of timber were washed into great gullies and covered with yellow sedge. Partition fences,

in most instances, were gone, and though the road still boasted some of the luxuriance of the hedge, yet it did so in a ragged and broken way, while the frequent gaps were filled with mouldy looking rails; and now and then a tottering gate was seen propped up in various ways for the protection of those portions of the fields which happened to be under cultivation.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and I was eight miles from Medfield when I observed a heavy thunder shower approaching. Taking in the breadth of the cloud and its nearness, it was evident that in my umbrellaless condition a drenching was inevitable unless cover could speedily be found. The nearest house was over a quarter of a mile ahead. It was one of the old Southern homes, large and imposing, and situated on a swell of ground. It was literally buried in the heart of what was once a beautiful grove, but through neglect had become a tangled woodland. The house-top and a portion of the portico with its large pillars could be seen from the road, but I saw the rain would be upon me before I could gain its shelter.

I was just reconciling my mind to the thought of exposure to the weather, when the eye took in another grove, and just appearing over the tops of the trees, the Gothic roof and upper brick walls

of what seemed to be a church. Leaping my horse over a low part of the fence, I galloped swiftly through the woodland in the direction of the building. It proved to be a small brick chapel, once quite handsome, but now in ruins. Riding my horse into a kind of outer vestibule which promised protection, I had just done so when the storm burst forth in a perfect fury. I was in a measure sheltered from the downpour, though the wind would bring in, occasionally, considerable spray from its lateral sweeps. For quite a while I stood listening to the crashing thunder, watching the slanting lines of rain and the tossing branches of the trees. Finally, hitching my horse to a brick pillar, I walked into the church proper, and noted with a glance its complete desolation. I learned afterwards that the building was not over fifty years old, though it looked a thousand that afternoon. The walls were cracked, the roof was broken in at places, the narrow diamond shaped windows were gone, and through the apertures I could see some granite and marble shafts, with bowing and swaying cedars among them; and further still, the great branches of oaks and elms twisting and wringing themselves as if in mortal grief. The occasional flash of lightning, and the attendant crash of thunder, filling the empty edifice with startling echoes, intensified the solemnity

of the scene, so that it was with a sense of relief that I went back to the outer porch and the companionship of my horse.

In twenty minutes the cloud passed away, the rain ceased, and the low growl of thunder in the distance showed the storm was over. The slanting beams of the evening sun began to strike through the thick foliage of the grove, while the little sighs of the almost spent wind shook off the raindrops from the green leaves to fall with soft patter upon the brown carpet and odorous turf made by the leaf deposits of other seasons.

Leading my horse to a broken down fence in front of the church, I returned to explore the small burial ground which I had seen through the windows in the rear of the church. From boyhood, a graveyard has always possessed for me a peculiar fascination.

I discovered that it was a private cemetery; and while there were different names on the pillars and vaults, yet they were easily recognized as family connections, and the distinguishing one was Dabney.

While looking upon the weather stained shafts, untrimmed shrubbery, and green moss covering a number of the graves and stone slabs, my eyes suddenly fell on a tomb in a corner of the graveyard which at once arrested my attention. The

crypt was of marble and even with the ground. At each corner was an urn several feet in height of the same material. At the side of the grave was an iron chair, and in front of it was a small square of granite. The soil of the yard had by rains encroached upon the upper portion of the sepulcher; one of the urns had been pushed over by the projecting lower branches of a cedar, and the iron chair was rusty from its long exposure to the elements.

It would be hard to explain, but the strangest influence was at once exercised over me by this lonely tomb in the churchyard. There were other neglected graves, but something about this one peculiarly affected and moved me. There was evidence of unusual devotion to this silent sleeper. Some one used to come here and sit by the side of this pulseless and voiceless inhabitant of the ground. Who was it in the grave, and who sat in the chair? Was it a man or woman, and why had the person ceased to visit the place? Had the lonely watcher moved away, or had death at last come and reunited the separated ones?

These thoughts came quickly over me; and, with a curiosity, not unhallowed or vulgar, but born of a tender interest in the heart, I drew near the spot to read the name of the dead. Finding that the drifting dirt and green mold had covered parts

of the inscription I took my knife, and digging out the earth from the hollow lettering, read the following words:

Sacred
TO THE MEMORY
of
GERALD FAULKNER,
BORN
May 1st, 1833,
DIED
June 8th, 1859.

Aged 26 years, 1 month and 7 days.

This was all. Part of the mystery was removed, but much remained uncleared. The form lying beneath me was that of a young man, and the name was Faulkner; but why should a Faulkner be in a burial ground belonging evidently to the Dabneys, and who was this lonely mourner who grieved over him? Was it wife, sister, or friend? What had become of the being who had kept such faithful vigil over the dead, and to what part of the world had the stricken one drifted? Then other thoughts came up. Had he been forgotten, or had some distant cemetery received the form of the lonely watcher?

The place so affected and held me that it was

with difficulty I could tear myself away; but glancing at my watch and observing that it was nearly four o'clock, I turned, and came round in front of the ruined church to the place where my horse was fastened. The note of a blue jay sounded from the depths of the grove, while from far overhead came the caw of a crow as he floated over the fields toward his nest or roost in the forest, several miles distant.

I was about to mount my horse when I heard the voice of a negro man singing in the distance. He was between me and the road I had left, and was evidently entering the edge of the grove. The voice was full and rich and had the tremulous note in it for which the negro is famous. The song was one of those weird, plaintive hymns that are so often sung by the negroes of the South. The singer at first was out of sight, but in a minute or so appeared, coming up the path which led in front of the church. When he was about thirty yards off I cried out,

“Hello!”

He stopped and turned his face, not exactly in my direction, and answered:

“Who dat callin’ me?”

“It’s me,” I replied.

“Who’s me, I lak ter know,” was the sturdy response as the man now fully confronted me.

“It’s me, Uncle,” I said, “come this way.”

“Whut mek you call me Uncle? I ain’t yoh Uncle.”

“Well, come here anyhow. I want to see you.”

The negro had rested both his hands on his white oak walking stick and was staring fixedly at me. Evidently something in my appearance and words disarmed him of suspicion, and leaving the path, he came pushing his way through the underbrush, the twigs snapping under his feet as he approached, and finally stood before me. He seemed to be about sixty years old, though he may have been older. His hair, eyebrows, and beard were gray, the hat which he held in his hand was limp and full of holes, while coat, he had none. His coarse shirt of Lowells, once white, but now brown from much use, was open from the neck half way down the chest, revealing a triangle of black skin. His trousers, made of some coarse heavy goods of grayish tint, had patches of several different colors. Yet with all these signs of poverty, the face was a good one, showing kindness of heart and character.

“I thought,” said I, with a reassuring smile, “that you would not mind coming a few yards to get a plug of tobacco for answering a few questions.”

The black face instantly lighted up with a

gleam of pleasure as he said with great heartiness:

“Dat I don’t, Boss. You dun hit me a center lick, shore”; and then followed that rich African laugh, “kee-yaw-yaw,” which, once heard, can never be forgotten.

I handed him the half plug, which I never used myself, but often in my rides through the country carried with me to obtain small favors of the colored people in opening gates, showing me over unknown fields, creeks, etc. He took the tobacco, turned it over several times, smelled it on both sides with evident satisfaction, and said:

“Well, I ’clare to gracious, I wuz jes’ wishin’ fur sum er dis same ole Virginny.”

“What is your name, Uncle?”

This time the man took no offense at the word “Uncle.” I could easily see I had advanced in his favor and confidence, with my Southern accent, and manner of giving.

“Mah name’s Pompey, suh; Pompey Dabney. Sometimes when folks is in er hurry dey calls me Pomp. I b’long’d ter de Dabneys, suh, foh de Wah.”

“They were an old Mississippi family, I believe?”

“Yes, suh; but dey come f’um ole Virginny hyer an’ brung all dey niggers wid ’em ’bout de time

de stars fell. Mah Mammy wuz in er wagon sleep when she riz up an' seed 'em shoot an' drap."

"I suppose," said I, "that the Dabneys were very rich."

"Law, chile, cream warnt no whar ter dem, dey wuz dat rich. Dey had foh plantations,—one on de 'Azoo River, an' one on Silver Krik, an' one down in Luzanny, an' den de home place hyer in de hills. You mus' er seed de house up dah on de rise o' de groun' foh yer turns in hyer."

I replied that I had seen the house in the distance, and then said:

"I heard of the Dabneys when I was a boy. I wish you would tell me a little about them; whether they are living, and if so, what has become of them. Then just before I saw you I was in the little church to escape the rain, and wondered who had built it."

"De Dabneys, dey built it, suh. Dey was Piskolopyuns an' dey sont off fur a preacher, an' sot him up hyer jes' fur dey own se'ves; an' dat church is a Piskolopyun church, suh."

"But this is not all I wish to know," I resumed. "Just back of the church in that burial ground yonder, there is a tomb with an iron chair by its side. Can you tell me anything about it, and why a person named Faulkner should be buried in the Dabney graveyard; and who used to sit in that

iron chair; and why is it that the grave is now so neglected?"

" 'Deed I kin, suh, an' dah ain't no nigger in dis whole country knows as much as me 'bouten whut youse axen. Nigh onter all de ole kullud folks is daid; an' de young niggers, suh, dun all gone ter Medfield ter live, or, you better say, ter starve. Dey doan know nuffin 'tall 'bout de quality times we had foh de Wah."

"It was in the hope that you could tell me these things that I called you, and if you will do so I'll give you something better than a plug of tobacco."

In reply to this, Pompey, with a chuckle, sat down upon the lower step of an old horse block; and now, with both hands around his stick, and now laying it in his lap while gesticulating, he thus delivered himself:

"Yes, suh, all de Dabneys is daid 'cep'n me an' some neffers an' neeces I nuvver seed. Ole Mahster died de ye'r—lemme see—de ye'r I had de rumatiz so bad—oh yes—six ye'r foh de Wah. Dat lef' Ole Mistis an' Miss Cora in de big house up dah. I tell you dat house wus er house sho 'nough. Dey use to hev' big gwines on up dah in Old Mahster's time. Folks come f'um Virginny an' eve'ywhar, an' spen' a mont' at a time, an' I tell yer it kep' us niggers on de jump. Den arter he died Ole Miss' tuk Miss Cora off to school up Norf som'ers,

an' den dey trabel in Europe er while. An' when dey come home at las' dey done been gone five year, an' Miss Cora, whut wuz a gal when she lef', come back a growed up woman. An', my sakes, de young gemmuns wuz mos' crazy 'bouten her."

"I heard," interrupted I, "that she was a very beautiful girl."

"Mun alive," exclaimed the old darkey, thrusting his stick repeatedly into the soft ground in giving emphasis to his words, "nobody could hol' a candle to her. She walk lak she 'spise de groun'. She put all de urrer young ladies 'bout hyer plum in de shade, an' she flung de young gemmun sky high. Judge Seymour's son, he try to ketch her, an' played de guitar o' nights under her winder; but shoo! she jes' laugh at him an' he tuk sick an' lak to died. Den Ginnul Sinclair's brudder, him as wuz a Major in de rig'lar army, hyer he come along wid his shoulder straps an' brass buttons an' mustache an' goatee; but he couldn' do nuffin 'tall wid Miss Cora. He jes' warnt no whar an' she sont him flyin' 'long wid de res'.

"One day she wuz out ridin' wid him an' as dey wuz gallopin' 'long de lane jes' out dah, her comb drapped out, an' her long black hair fell down all roun' her. Den she look at him a laughin' wid her cheeks all red, an' her black eyes a shinin'—an' I 'clare foh de Lawd, dat man look lak he

gwine to hev a fit. He jes' couldn' scacely 'have hisse'f."

"How do you know all this?"

"How'd I know? Lor' bless yer, I wuz Ole Mahster's body suvvant two year; an' arter dey come back fum Europe dey tuk me outen de field an' 'stalled me in de house ag'in, to wait on 'em an' do de 'sponsibilities de urrer niggers couldn' do. So w'en Miss Cora rid out on dat skrumshus bay mahr o' hern, I allers went along on de big roan to take keer o' her. An' so dat day w'en de comb fell on de groun', Major Sinclair he flung hisse'f offen his hoss quicker'n light'nin', grabbed it up an' put it in his breas' pocket an' turned up his eyes at Miss Cora lak a sick duck. I sholy thought Miss Cora would drap offen her hoss a laughin'. Bymby she say to him,

" 'Major Sinclair, please gimme mah comb.'

"But he 'lowed he'd ruther die 'an do it. Den Miss Cora turn ter me an' say, 'Pompey, go an' cut me a long thaw'n offen dat tree.' An' I done it, an' fethched her er fine slick one mos' six inches long. When I retched de thaw'n to her, de Major he hilt back lak he skeered Miss Cora gwine to gouge him wid it. But she put it krost-ways in her mouf, an' tuk her long hair in her han's and twis' it up in er big knot behin'. Den she tuk de thaw'n outen her mouf an' stuek it in de knot, an'

I tell you, it hilt it. Nex' thing, she cluck ter her hoss an' gallop up de road wid de Major arter her. Well, suh, you think dat man when he hope Miss Cora off at de hoss-block, didn't ax her fur dat thawn? Den I hyer Miss Cora say ter him—

“ ‘Major Sinclair, hit looks to me lak you want all I got!’ ”

“I wuz 'hin' de roan makin' out lak I wuz bucklin' a strap w'en I hyerd her say dat. Den I say to myse'f, 'Yes, Lawd, she done tole de Gawd's truf; dat man wants all we niggers 'sides Miss Cora.' ”

“Pears dat vahy night he got Miss Cora orf in de consuvvatory 'mungst de palmetters an' ole-yanders, whar dey couldn' see him fum de parlor. I wuz by de glass doh whut leads ouden to de yard, a stoppin' 'hind some flowers, w'en I see Major Sinclair git down on one knee an' say sumpin'. Den I hyer Miss Cora say,

“ ‘Major Sinclair, please don' be so reediker-lus',—an' de Major he grab her han' an' say,

“ ‘Miss Dabney, I love you wid all my heart,—I'se gwine plum 'stracted 'bout you.' Den he up an' ax her to mahy him; an' Miss Cora, she pull her han' away suddint, an' drawin' herse'f up straight, she sayd,

“ ‘Major Sinclair, de case is hopeless—I kin nuvver mahy you.' ”

“W’en I hyer dat fur, I slip outen de consuvatory an’ sot on de aige o’ de peazzy a thinkin’. Bymby, word come to me to hev de Major’s hoss brung out. So I walks down to de lot an’ tells Joe to fotch Major Sinclair’s hoss up, dat he’s done had a onexpected call home an’ is desput anxious to git dah at once. So Joe, he tuk de hoss up an’ I gits in de shadder uv a big ole poplar by de lot fence, an’ looks out fur de Major. Pres’ny, hyer he comes down de road, a clipperty-clipperty, wid his cow hide a fallin’ on his black hoss, an’ he a puffin’ an’ a blowin’ an’ a cussin’ till he ’minst me uv a steam ingine on de rail road. He jes’ whiz pas’ me on dat hoss lak a comet, an’ I sot down on de grass, an’ I sho laughed.

“It all ’minst me er how I courted Dinah. Dinah, you know, wuz Miss Cora’s maid, an’ wuz as lakly a yaller gal as ever shuk a foot over a puncheon floh. Well, suh, I got powful sot on Dinah, an’ got to mopin’ aroun’ and couldn’ eat no victuals o’ no kin’, I wuz dat bad off. I look so mournful dat Dinah tol’ me I minst her of a sick calf wid no mammy. Ev’y time I try to git her in a corner and purmulgate ’bout my feelins she mek out she hyer Miss Cora callin’ her, an’ lit out. Den she mek out she was mighty intrusted in a new yaller nigger, name Caesar, dat old Mistis bought to wait on de dinin’ room. My! how Dinah did tek on wid

dat nigger, in special w'en I wuz round. On top o' dat, one day Miss Cora say to me, wid a funny look at Dinah, 'Pompey, do you know h'istory say dat Caesar got ahead o' Pompey?'" All dis made me feel mighty grumptions an' I say to myse'f—dis ting got to be fixed up dis vahy night.

"Now I done hyer Miss Cora readin' to her Ma at night 'bout how de fine gemmun drap on dey knees in 'spressin' dey feelin's, so dat night I meets up wid Dinah at de pump in de cistern house, in de back yard. De cistern house had lattice work all roun' it, an' de moonlight wuz a creepin' in sof', an' dah wuz Dinah, lookin' uncommon nice, an' de fus' thing she know I drapt on one knee an' try to put my han' on my breas', jes' so; but I speck I drap it too low, so w'en I sayd,

" 'I hev a great pain fur you hyer, Dinah', I 'clare to you, foh I could git anurrer word out, dat nigger say to me, she say,

" 'Is you got a pain in yoh stummick, Pompey? Mus' I run an' git you some pahygoric?'

"An' foh gracious, she up an' flung a dipper o' water onto me to bring me to, she say; an' den run in de house a laughin'.

"Laws-a-mussy, wuzn't I a bilin'. I jess went roun' de big house a puffin' an' a blowin' an' a

r'arin' lak Major Sinclair. I tell you de Major brung hit all back to me.

“Well, suh, as I went a tearin' 'roun' de corner o' de house I come ker bang 'ginst Caesar, who wuzn' lookin' fur me, an' I wuzn' lookin' fur him nuther. But he think I did it on puppus an' I thunk he did it on puppus, an' so we clinched an' fell over on de grass a hittin' an' a gougin'. I wuz all shuk up aforehan' an' pow'ful glad to work off some o' my miz'ry on somebody, an' special on dat nigger Caesar. So 'twarn' long 'foh I had him down an' wuz a poun'in' him good fashion, an' he callin' 'nough, 'nough, w'en up went a winder an' dar stood Miss Cora an' Dinah hinst her, lookin' 'stonished at us.

“ ‘Why, Pompey,’ Miss Cora say, ‘whut you doin’ to Caesar? Ain’ you ’shame o’ yohse’f?’

“Den I riz up offen Caesar an’ axed her pardin, an’ sayd,

“ ‘I speck Dinah kin tell you whut’s de mattah.’

“All de nex’ day I ’lowed we bofe gwine git a lickin’ fum de overseer fur dat freekus, but Caesar couldn’ git outen his baid an’ didn’ need anurrer whippin’; an’ Miss Cora tol’ me in de hall nex’ day dat I ought to be whipped, but she done thought it all over an’ as Caesar whipped Pompey wunst it might not hurt to let Pompey whip Caesar

wunst. Den she look at Dinah an' dey bofe laughed.

"I tell you, suh, I sutny riz in Dinah's eyes w'en she see me lick dat yaller nigger 'thout gittin' a scratch; whilst he had one eye shot up, his jaw all swelled up, an' eat spoon victuals fur a whole week wid one side o' his mouf."

"But, Pompey," I said, "all this is very interesting; but you must remember I want to know about the grave yonder in the burial ground."

"Sho 'nough, suh, sho 'nough. I'm a comin' to it, suh. Law, yes, honey, I'm a gittin' dar. You know I aint got no eddycation. Miss Cora tried her han' on me, to mek me talk more proper, she sayd, but I wuz brung up in de cotton patch and cawn fiel' an' got sot in my ways, so Miss Cora gin up tryin'. Dat yaller nigger, Caesar, could talk mos' as good as de white folks kase he wuz brung up in de big house. He wuz book larnt by his young Mahster foh de Dabneys bought him. He sutny did 'stonish me wid his big words! Dat wuz one way he try to cut me outen Dinah.

"Arter dat I tuk a fool notion to talk big lak Caesar. So w'en young Mister Carleton call to see Miss Cora, I tol' her:

"'Mister Carleton inquested to pay his sibilities to her pussonality.' Dat jes' whut he tol' me; but w'en I tol' Miss Helen she say:

“ ‘What?’

“Den I tol’ her ag’in an’ she kivered her face wid her fan, an’ Dinah laughed right out. ‘Pears to me dat yaller gal wuz allers laughin’ at me. I b’lieve she lak to show dem white teef o’ hern. But she wuz sutny a lakly lookin’ gal.

“Well, I gin up dat parlor talk whut Caesar an’ Dinah an’ de white folks used, an’ arter dat I spress myse’f as I knowed how. So you see, suh, I cain’ trabel over de groun’ lak a dog arter a rabbit in spressin’ myse’f; but, Law bless you, as I wuz a sayin’, I’m a gittin’ dar.”

The old man stopped a moment, lifted his ragged hat, wiped his kinky gray hair reflectively with his hand several times, cleared his throat, took an easier position on the old mouldering horse block, and resumed.

“Well, suh, as I wuz a sayin’, some o’ Miss Cora’s frien’s on Silver Crik, or de ‘Azoo River, writ fur her to come an’ spen’ a mont’ dar. So she went, an’ Ole Miss’ sont me along wid Miss Cora to tek keer o’ her trunks an’ things, an’ see dat she got dar safe. Dinah wuz sick an’ couldn’ go. I tell you, dey couldn’ git along widout Pompey in dem days. Hit wuz Pompey dis an’ Pompey dat all de time. I made de urrer niggers stan’ aroun’, I tell you! Ole Miss’ trus’ me wid ev’y-

thing, an' she knowed Miss Cora wuz plum safe if I go long wid her.

“Well, suh, we druv to Medfiel' an' tuk de railroad cyars an' come to Vicksbu'g. Dar Miss Cora spen' sev'ral days wid some o' her frien's an' 'quaintances 'foh she tuk de boat up de 'Azoo River. One day Miss Cora sont me up town fur sumpin' an' I lak to git los' 'mungst all dem houses; an' I never seed sich imperdent niggers as wuz drivin' de hacks aroun'. One lak to druv clean over me, an' den ax me whut I mean by stan'in' in de middle o' de street wid my mouf an' eyes wide open lak a fool. An' I up an' tol' him if he git down offen dat box fur a minute, I'd mek his mouf an' eyes open wussern mine,—a lazy, good fur nuffin' nobody, a 'sultin' gemmun of color as wuz a 'havin' deyselves. I tole him I b'long to de Dabneys whut owned moh niggers 'n his mangy hosses had hairs on dey poh ole bodies, an' I riz to come at him w'en he gin his two critters a cut an' flew down de street. I tell you, dat nigger wuz skeert, he wuz,” and Pompey indulged in another resounding kee-yaw-yaw.

“Arter dat I wuz steppin' out putty lively to mek up fur lost time wid dat nigger, w'en I pass a barber shop kep' by a free nigger. He wuz stan'in' in his doh an' see me kiverin' de groun' w'en he axed me if I wuz a travelin' or gwine

some whar. I turn my head quick, an' tole him I wuz fool huntin' an' I done foun' whut I come fur. Laws-a-mussy, but he wuz bilin' w'en I say dat. I tell you, sah, hit takes Pomp to dress dese free niggers down an' larn 'em dey place, an' how to 'have deyselves to gemmun o' color. Yes, Lawd!

“Arter a few days, Miss Cora's frien's went down to de big landin' to see her off on de 'Azoo River boat, whut wuz to leave at five o'clock. Mussy on me! I nuvver see so many boats in all my life as dey wuz down at dat wharf, a puffin' an' a blowin' dey whistles! 'Pears to me lak I seed a hunder'd. Some wuz a comin' in an' some wuz a backin' out, till I wuz dizzy. I couldn' count de niggers rollin' cotton bales an' bar'ls, an' packin' boxes on dey shoulders, while de mates wuz a cussin' an' a rarin'; an' de Cap'n wuz way up on de topmos' deck walkin' roun' lak Julius Caesar.

“Miss Cora's frien's had to gin her farewell at de w'arf, kase we got dar so late; so Miss Cora say good-by to 'em all, an' de Cap'n, lookin' as proud as a peacock lit out over de stage-plank wid Miss Cora on his arm, an' me a follerin' wid all dem shawls an' hat boxes an' um'brels, whilst a whole lot o' gemmuns stood leanin' 'ginst de gyards o' de boat a lookin' dey eyes out at Miss Cora.

“I tell you, suh, w'en she come up dem steps an' stood by de aidge o' de gyards, a smilin' an' a wavin' her putty white han' to her frien's on de sho', dem gemmuns quit lookin', right den an' dar at ev'ything but Miss Cora.

“Jes den, w'en de las' bell wuz a tollin' lak a fun'ral, an' de mate wuz a hollerin', an' de niggers wuz a draggin' in dat big plank, an' a singing 'Yo-ho-yo-e-oh,' an' de boat wuz a backin' out, I seed a young man runnin' 'cross de w'arf to'ard de plank dat wuz six foot away. Some gemmun hollered:

“‘Don' risk it—look out dar—an' some ladies scream out. But shoo! dat young man, 'thout lookin' up ur stoppin', tuk a flyin' jump an' lit on de plank as easy as a bird; an' come runnin' down dat slantin' boa'd as uncunsarned as if he wuz on de street.

“I notice he wuz a pow'ful han'some young man, wid a big black moustache an' black curly hair; an' w'en de urrer women screech Miss Cora nuvver say a word, but look at him as if she tryin' to 'member sumpin'.

“De Cap'n seem to know him an' say:

“‘Dat wuz a risky jump, Mister Faulkner.'

“An' de young man jes smile an' sayd, keerless lak:

“‘I been in greater danger oftentimes, Cap'n.'

An' w'en he sayd dat he tuk hizse'f off to de gemmun's cabin.

"Den it wuz I 'gins to 'member dat young man whut de Cap'n call' Mister Faulkner. I says to myse'f, dat's ole Ginnul Faulkner's son whut's been gone 'roun' de worl' dese five ye'r an' moh'.

"While I wuz stan'in' thinkin' bout w'en I seed him las', as a boy, w'en de folks sont him way up Norf to college, I hyerd a sudden crash behin' me lak heaven an' yearth wuz comin' togerrerr. I riz in de air an' would a sho landed in de middle o' de river, but I jes ketched myse'f in time, an' lookin' 'roun' I seed a li'l pop-eyed nigger a hit-tin' a piece o' sheet i'on wid a bass drum stiek an' makin' sich a racket I couldn' hye'r my own ye'rs. My breaf wuz putty nigh gone, but I manage to holler in his ye'r an' ax him in de name o' de Lawd, whut wuz de mattah! An' he leenst over to me an' say, in confidens, dat I wuz de infunneles' fool nigger he ever seed; dat supper wuz ready fur de white folks, an' dat de niggers could go below whar dey b'long. An' den he up an' tol' me dat sich a fool nigger as I wuz could go to a still wusser place. Den he tu'n away, making dat piece o' sheet i'on growl down de cabin lak a dyin' varmint moaning' hitse'f to death.

"I wuz sho glad Miss Cora didn' see me gin dat jump; but if I could ur had dat nigger whut

'sulted me, in my han's jes a few minutes, I'd a made a gong out o' him an' dey'd a hyerd him hollerin' clean back to Vicksbu'g—dey would dat! You hyer me say so! I sutny wuz mad wid dat nigger, an' hit wuz a full hour foh I could git my riled feelin's smoooved out.

“Arter supper Miss Cora sot out on de front deck a lookin' at de lights o' Vicksbu'g, as we went 'roun' de big hoss-shoe ben', fur mos' a hour. De Cap'n, an' de clerks w'en de Cap'n wuzzen 'roun', an' a lot o' urrer gemmun, who got dey-se'ves interdooced, wuz a hoppin' an' a skippin' roun' Miss Cora, an' showin' her dis an' pintin' her dat, tell hit would a run some folks 'stracted; but Miss Cora, she hilt her own an' laugh an' talk back pleasan' tell I thought I nuvver see her 'pear so han'some. I stayed close by an' kep' my eyes on Miss Cora, an' if anybody had dassun to say a word to her whut wuzzen right, I'd a bust his haid wide open if dey kilt me de nex' minute.

“Wunst Miss Cora tu'n an' look at me an' say, ‘Pompey, hev you had yoh supper?’ an' anurrer time, ‘Are dey treatin' you well on de boat, Pompey?’

“W'en some o' de gemmun hyerd her talk dis way to me, an' foun' out I wuz her nigger, dey pass by me sorter keerless lak an' say, ‘Hyer's ha'f a dollar fur you, Pompey,’ an' some time it

wuz, 'Pompey, youse a clever feller. Hyer's a dollar fur you.' Well, suh, I got nigh on to five dollars dat night."

Again the "kee-yaw-yaw" laugh shot from the lips of the negro as he recalled the effect of the reflected beauty of his young Mistress upon his pocket.

"Hit wuz w'ile all dese gemmun wuz a talkin' an' a scrapin' 'roun' Miss Cora dat I seed Mister Faulkner ag'in, leanin' ag'inst de gyards smoking a seegar an' looking back at de lights o' Vicksbu'g we wuz a leavin' behin'. Wunst I seed him turn an' look at Miss Cora w'en she gin one o' her musical laughs dat used to set Major Sinclair half crazy. At de same time I see Miss Cora look at him, an' dey bofe look steady at each urrer, 'peared to me, fur 'bout a minute. Den Miss Cora turn to answer one o' de scrapin' gemmun, an' Mr. Faulkner look back at Vicksbu'g. Bymby I ketch 'em lookin' at each urrer again an' den dey bofe turn quick an' nuvver look no moh. I say to myse'f, 'Hi.' Dat's all I sayd, but I thunk a heap.

"Well, suh, arter while Miss Cora say she's tired, an' would retire. So sayin' good-night to all, an' tellin' me to take kyer o' myse'f, she re-journed to her state room.

"Dey put me way up in de place call' de Texas,

or Mexico, I dunno which; but shoo! I wuzn't gwine stay up dah dat fur fum Miss Cora! Whut if de boat tuk fire an' Miss Cora bu'n up? Whut I gwine to say to her Ma w'en I see her? Naw, sah! I riz right up fum dat Mexico place, an' I say to myse'f, 'I's gwine to go down close to whar Miss Cora is.' So I krep' out on de herrikin deck, an' made my way vahy keerful to de back steps.

"I stayed at de eend o' de boat a minute lookin' 'roun'. We done got outen de Miss'ippi, clare th'u' de Ole River, an' wuz now way up de 'Azoo. De paddle wheels on bofe sides o' de boat wuz a makin' music as dey hit de water; two steam pipes close to me wuz a sayin',—korf-korf, korf-korf,—an' de ole boat wuz a trim'lin' an' a shakin. Outen de top o' de big chimleys whut wuz bigger 'n taller 'n a gum tree, de sparks wuz flyin' an' de smoke come pourin' out up dar in two long trails an' got mixed, tell dey look lak two big snakes a twis'in' deyse'ves togerrer way down de river an' a crawlin' arter us.

"Jes den I looks for'ard an' see Mister Faulkner a walkin' up an' down on de herrikin deck wid dat everlastin' seegar in his mouf. I laugh in my sleeve an' say, 'I speck he cain' res' fur thinkin' o' Miss Cora.' Den I went down de back stairs an' hunted fur Miss Cora's room. I kep' a

tappin' firs' at one doh an' den anurrer, till at las' I come to de right room, an' w'en Miss Cora hyer me, she say in dat sof' way o' hern,

“ ‘Is dat you, Pompey? Whut is de mattah. Is dare any trouble?’

“ ‘No, Miss Cora,’ says I, ‘dah ain’ no trouble yit, but dey mought be some, an’ I come hyer to be close to you if sumpin’ do happen.’

“Den she ax me won’t I be discumfertable out dah; an’ I tell her ‘No, Maam’, kase ’twuz a wahm night an’ I purfurs to be out dohs.

“Well, suh, I lays down in de corner, ’hin’ some trunks so de watchman couldn’ see me, but close to Miss Cora’s doh, an’ presny I drapt off in a light doze. I speck I mus’ a slep three ur foh hours, w’en all to wunst dat boat gin a big jar an’ went to tr’m’lin’ an’ a shakin’ lak a nigger wid a swamp chill. I runs for’ard an’ de li’l bells wuz a jinglin’ down on de b’iler deck, an’ de mate an’ de rousterbouts an’ deck han’s wuz a runnin’ ’roun’ an’ cussin’ tuhrbul. Den somebody holler out dat de boat hed struck a snag an’ wuz gwine down. Somebody else holler, wake up de passengers an’ ’foh ’twuz ouden his mouf I dun fly back to Miss Cora, an’ wuz poun’in’ on her doh, an’ hollerin’ to her to wake up quick, dat de boat wuz sinkin’. But she, de Lawd bless her angel soul, wuz so tired fum all dem three days runnin’ ’roun’

in Vicksbu'g dat de jar an' trimlin' o' de boat, all de rousterbouts gwine on, an' all de 'citement down stairs, an' me callin' to her, nuvver move her. So I hit de doh ag'in an' I hyer her sof' sweet voice sayin',

“ ‘Is dat you, Pompey? Whut's de matter?’ ”

“An' I holler back, ‘fur Gawd sake, Miss Cora, git up quick an' open dis doh; de boat's sinkin' an' sinkin' fas'. Quick, chile, hurry or we'll all be drownded.’ De nex' secon' I hyer her bahr foot hit de floh, an' hyer her tryin' to open de doh. Den she call out,

“ ‘Pompey, sumpin's de matter wid de doh!’ ”

“Jes den I feel de boat sett'lin' for-ard an' a careenin' over to one side an' a trim'lin all over whilst de women wuz a screechin' an' men hollerin', an' de tables, cheers an' chandeliers wuz a smashin' inside de cabin.

“Den I cry out quick to Miss Cora, wid my heart in my mouf an' tears runnin' down my face,

“Miss Cora, run ouden yoh front doh an' down de cabin to de back doh at de eend an' I'll be dah to meet you an' he'p you. An' I hyer her say as cool as a cucumber,

“ ‘All right, Pompey,’ an' her front doh bang, an' I kno'd she wuz gone. Den I tell you, I done sum fas' runnin' an' got 'roun' de back gyards to meet her. Jes den de ole boat gin anurrer sot an'

sudge for'd, an' sumpin' orful heavy fell agin de doh befoh me an' I couldn' budge it. I holler fer Miss Cora an' dah wuz no answer. I looked lak a crazy nigger, an' wuz gwine 'stracted fas' w'en I hyer somebody jumpin' down de back steps an' I see Mister Faulkner wid his face white an' his eyes blazin.' He ketched me by de shoulder an' say:

“ ‘Whar Miss Dabney?’

“ ‘An' I bust out a cryin an' say:

“ ‘She in dah som'ers an' I cain git to her.’

“Den he tuk de floh mop in his han' an' gin dat doh sich a smash dat ev'y pane o' glass wuz bus' to pieces. Den wid his fingers a trem'lin' he toh out mos' o' de sash, cuttin' his han's as he done it, an' tried to git th'u', but de boat had sot dis way an' dat way, an' flung de funnicher ag'in de doh an' block hit up. Den he call to her an' nobody answer. Den he tuk a long look up de cabin an' sayd:

“ ‘Thank God, yonder she is'; an' de nex' minute he done lef' me an' wuz flyin' up stairs an' me arter him. Dare wuz no time to lose, 'case de boat wuz sinkin' fas'. I see him take up a axe an' bre'k in de transum. I wuz wid him w'en he pull it out an' we bofe look in; an' dah de cabin wuz full o' water, wid tables an' cheers an' dead folks floating' aroun'. De water had riz up to

de ceilin' in de gemmun's cabin, an' wuz puttin' out de lights w'en we look in. Den we look de urrer way, an' dah, almos' right under us, wuz Miss Cora in her white night gown an' long black hair fallin' over her shoulders an' pinned bow-dashusly to de wall. Dah she wuz, wais' deep in water, an' pinned tight by dem big dinin' tables an' things, so she couldn' move herse'f, ur lif' her han's. Mister Faulkner spoke up to her lak light-nin'.

“ ‘Miss Dabney, are you hurt?’

“ ‘An' she look up lak she sorter dazed, an' wid a faint smile say:

“ ‘Sumpin' has struck me, I b'lieve.' Den Mr. Faulkner, stoopin' way down, sayd:

“ ‘I cain' quite reach yoh shoulders to lif' you up; kin you raise yoh han's to me?’

“ ‘She shuk her head an' look up, an' den we see her fix: she wuz pinned in an' hilt down by dose varus contrapshuns in de cabin. Now, all dis tuk place foh a man could say Jack Roberson an' count twenty ef I is slow er tellin' it. De nex' thing, I hyer Mister Faulkner say:

“ ‘I hate to do it, but I mus' save you any way,' an' Lor' bless you, dat man take dat big scrumshus suit o' Miss Cora's hair in his han's an' lif' her clare up by it jes' as de boat gin anurrer roll an' flung de tables offen her. Den, 'foh dey roll

back, Mister Faulkner had a good holt on her arms, an' wid de veins a stan'in' out in his forrid lak cords, he drug her th'u the transum, an' toted her in his arms to one o' de boats dey keep on de herrikin deck. He made her lay down on some baggin' he flung in de boat, an' den quicker'n a flash he tuk his black dress coat off an' put it roun' Miss Cora snug an' nice.

"De nex' thing dat man do, an' I nuvver see a man so quick on de trigger, he whip out his knife, cut de ropes tyin' de boat to de deck, put two oars in, an' den stoppin' fur de fus' time an' wipin' his face wid his han'kercher, he say to me as we bofe wuz leanin' 'g'inst de boat, 'if de boat sink now we kin float off safe in dis.'

"All dis time Miss Cora nuvver say a word. Her face wuz mighty red w'en Mister Faulkner put his arms roundst her, an' pack her to dat boat; but w'en he put his nice black coat roun' her she look up gra'ful at him an' I see a sof' look in her eyes w'en dey wuz on him; so I say to myse'f, 'Hi' again. I tell you, suh, you cain' fool dis nigger bouten some things.'"

"What became of the steamboat?" I asked, really interested in the story. "Did she go to the bottom, and you three float off down the stream?"

"Naw, suh, an' yes, suh, bofe. W'ile Mister Faulkner wuz savin' an' taking keer o' Miss Cora,

de ole boat tu'n her head outen to'ards de middle o' de river an' settled down on de bottom wid her hin' eend, whar we wuz, lif' up so dat de bow, as dey call it, wuz all outen sight; but de two big chimleys wuz p'intin' up at de stars lak de toes uv a dead nigger. Mister Faulkner tole Miss Cora de boat would sink no moh, an' if it did he could fetch her safe to sho' anyhow."

"What became of the other passengers?" I asked.

"Some uv 'em wuz drowneded an' some tuk to de boats an' pull down de river fur help. You see, dah wuz a big overflow dat spring, an' de banks o' de 'Azoo River whar we wuz havin' our mis'ry wuz kivered wid water, an' dey couldn' lan' dah. Some o' de gemmun dat wuz so spry roun' Miss Cora de foh part o' de night wuz pyerched up on bales an' planks not fur fum us, but as dey didn' have all dey close on, dey kep' a speckful distance fum Miss Cora. Some had on one thing an' some anurrer, an' some had on skasely nothin' 'tall. Mister Faulkner, as he tole Miss Cora, had nuvver gone to bed. He sayd he couldn' sleep; so dar he wuz all fixed up nice, cep'n his coat, whut he done flung 'roun' Miss Cora. Dem men had him fenced off fum her de ev'nin' befoh, but bless yoh soul, honey, he sholy had 'em fenced off on de herrikin deck dat night. 'Peared to me Mister Faulkner

an' Miss Cora got to un'erstan'in' each urrer pow'ful well dat night on sich short 'quaintance. Dey nuvver say much, but whut dey did say, hit sholy counted.

“While we wuz all dah waitin' fur de row boats to come back fur us, we hyerd a steamboat whistle up de river. I tell you ev'ybody wuz sho' glad. All de men got bol' an' started to bet whut steamer hit wuz, an' some o' de ladies tuk de hyxterics. We hyerd her comin' closter and closter, her paddles a hittin' de water a mile away, an' de big bell soun'in' fur de cotton lan'in's. Bymby we seed her come sweepin' roun' de ben' o' de river, wid her lights an' big black chimleys, an' piled all 'roun' wid cotton bales. All de gemmun got to hollerin' an' wavin' dey hankerchers, but she seed us 'thout dat, an' blowed her whistle an' toll her bell, an' come a bearin' down on us, an' drap down stream a ways an' den move sof' back up to us. Well, suh, I hyer dem river men a hollerin' an' a splainin' to each urrer, an' a cussin' cross de water foh de boat flung a single plank to us. I tell you, suh, dem river men warn' no ways 'ligious. Dey wuz a cussin' foh de boat sunk, an' a cussin' w'en she wuz gwine down, an' a cussin' w'en turrer boat arriv'. 'Twas cussin' all de time.

“Well, twarn' fifteen minutes foh we wuz tuk aboard, an' dey wuz a projickin' 'roun' in de

cabin to see if anybody done lef' a livin' in dah. W'ile dey at dat Mister Faulkner axed me ef I know whar wuz Miss Cora's trunk. I tole him one wuz on de forrer'd deck an' now at bottom o' de river, an' de urrer one Miss Cora had move' close to her room on de back gyards.

“Well, suh, I nuvver seed sich a man. He swung hisse'f over de side o' de roof, slip down de pos', an' me arter him; an' bless you, we fin' dat trunk all kivered up wid urrer things. I see Mister Faulkner gin de Mate five dollars, an' dat trunk in jes no time wuz settin' by Miss Cora's state-room doh, as peaceful as if nuffin ever done happen. Den Mister Faulkner sont me to tell her de trunk wuz dah. W'en I tap at Miss Cora's doh, an' tole her whut Mr. Faulkner say, she nuvver say nuffin for a minute, an' bym-by she put out her putty han' an' gin me Mister Gerald's coat an' sayd:

“ ‘Kerry it to him at once, Pompey, an' tell him I say ter please take keer o' hizse'f.’ I walks down de cabin wid de coat, an' as I go I say ter myse'f, ‘Hi!’

“We got back to Vicksbu'g nex' ev'nin', an' Miss Cora gin up her Silver Crik trip. She 'lowed dat her Ma would be 'stracted; 'sides ha'f her cloze wuz in de bottom o' dat 'Azoo River; an' so she lit out fur home an' me wid her. Mister Ger-

ald seed Miss Cora off at de kyars. I hyerd him tell her he compel to go up de nex' day to one o' his Pa's plantations, an' he hope to see her agin in two weeks.

“Den Miss Cora say fur him not to hurry hisse’f; dat cotton an’ corn an’ levees wuz vahy importan’ an’ mus’n be neglected fur nuffin ur nobody. Den she look away ’cross de hills ’roun’ Vicksbu’g as if she did’n know Mister Faulkner wuz stan’in’ close by her a hol’in’ out his han’ to say good-bye.

“I jes’ wonder whut meks women folks so aggervatin’. Dat wuz de vahy way Dinah use’ to treat me sometimes; an’ special’ w’en dat yaller nigger, Caesar, wuz ’roun’. But Lor’ bless you, w’en me an’ Miss Cora done got back, an’ Dinah an’ all de res’ hear ’bout de tuhrbul steamboat ’sperience, an’ how I hope to save Miss Cora’s life—Shoo! Caesar don’ stan’ no moh chance arter dat wid Dinah. An’ dat Caesar up an’ tol’ Dinah dat if he had been dah he’d done more’n me; dat he’d a got Miss Cora outen dat place widout de hope o’ Mister Faulkner. But hit woudn’ do, an’ Dinah ’gin to look sof’ on me fum dat vahy time.

“In ’bout two weeks I notice Miss Cora gittin’ onresless. She ’peared mighty intrusted in readin’ de Vicksbu’g papers ’bouten de ’rival o’ de

boats an' sich lak. One day Ole Miss say to her:

“ ‘Cora, I didn’ know you lak to read de papers.’ ”

“ ‘An’ Miss Cora say sumpin’ keerless, an’ her face git red lak a peony. ”

“ ‘De vahy nex’ ev’nin’ Ole Miss an’ Miss Cora wuz sittin’ on de front gal’ry talkin’ wid Major Carlisle, Ole Miss’s brudder fum Virginny, whut spen’ a few weeks wid de famly ev’y ye’r. Hit wuz a pleasan’ ev’nin’ in May jes’ foh sun down. I wuz waterin’ Miss Cora’s plants by de doh steps, an’ some locusses wuz singin’ dey moanful song in de trees. I kin hyer dem locusses to dis day. ”

“ ‘Pres’ny, I hyer Major Carlisle say dat de locusses wuz increasin’ an’ dat dey all had the letter W on dey wings, an’ people say hit token trouble a comin’, an’ de letter W showed whut hit wuz gwine to be. Ole Miss laugh an’ say, ”

“ ‘ ‘Hit mus’ be war, fur de overflow has already come an’ we have de trouble o’ water.’ ”

“ ‘Den Major Carlisle say, blowin’ de ashes offen his seegar, dat W stood fur urrer troubles ’sides war,—dat he done ’membered hearin’ wine an’ women put in dat lis’, an’ we mus’ not furgit dat W stan’ fur woe hitse’f. ”

“ ‘Den Miss Cora speak up an’ sayd, she b’lieve’ ”

dey wuz superstitious; an' jes den I hyer Major Carlisle say,

“ ‘Whut a splendid hossman dat is ridin’ yonder.’

“We all look up an’ see a young man cant’rin’ ’long de big road on a fine black hoss. De hoss wuz skittish an’ skeery, but his rider sot him lak dey wuz one piece. W’en he come to our big gate de gemmun stop an’ raise de latch, an’ we could see him th’u’ de trees comin’ roun’ de av’nu’ curve, an’ ridin’ up to’ards de house whar we wuz. I look jes once an’ knowed who ’twuz. Den I look quick fur Miss Cora, an’ she done gone! I tu’n to Major Carlisle an’ say,

“ ‘Dat’s Mister Gerald Faulkner, sah.’

“Well, dey sutney wuz glad to see him an’ in-shured him so. Ole Miss look lak she never leggo his han’ an’ call him her daughter’s pursurver. Den she told me to have Mister Faulkner’s hoss tuk to de stable at once. Major Carlisle wuz pow’ful perlite, too. Den dey bofe ’gin to say, ‘Whar is Cora?’ An’ jes den Miss Cora step outen de hall lookin’ so putty dat I see Mister Faulkner’s eyes look lak dey wuz eatin’ her up, an’ his voice had a kin’ o’ trimble as he say,

“ ‘Miss Dabney, do we need to be interdooced?’

“I had been wond’rin’ whut make Miss Cora

lef' so sudden w'en she seed Mister Gerald comin'. Dah she been lookin' fur him fur days, an' now w'en he gits in sight an' wuz mos' dah, she run away. I axed Dinah 'bout sich 'havior, an' she toss her haid an' sayd, we men folks wuz stoopid an' couldn' see th'u' a mill stone wid a hole in it.

"Howsomever, I sayd to Dinah dat I nuvver seed Miss Cora look puttier in mah life, an' dat she sutny wuz too putty fur any one man in de worl'. Den Dinah snap me up ag'in by axin me how many men I speck Miss Cora to marry. I tried to sass her back, but she lef' me foh I could 'spress myse'f. I tell you, suh, women folks is sho' cur'us.

"Arter w'ile dey all went in de libra'y an' I hyer 'em laughin' an' gwine on wid some moh comp'ny whut drapt in, so I went out an' sot on de front steps a lis'nin' to de locusses an' thinkin' 'bout whut Major Carlisle say 'bout dat W on dey wings. 'Pears to me I kin hyer dem locusses singin' to dis vahy day. Hit wuz sholy a solumcholly tune.

"Arter dat day, dah wuz great kerryin's on at de big house, an' whut wid rides an' picnics an' parties an' sich lak, de summer pass away an' Fall come. I kep' wond'rin' when Mister Gerald an' Miss Cora gwine fix dat thing up whut wuz bearin' so on dey min's. Sev'ral times I see Mister

Gerald gittin' ready to speak, an' Miss Cora would tu'n hit off, ur jump up an' say she didn' know whar her fan wuz, an' all sich talk. Women is sutny cur'us an' aggervatin'.

“Bymby, Mister Gerald quit comin' an' nigh a whole mont' pass an' no Mister Gerald. Den we hyer he wuz gwine 'roun' a good deal wid a young lady whut wuz vis'tin' his Pa an' Ma, an' dat she wuz pow'ful han'some, an' folks sayd she had ketched Mister Gerald. I hyerd Major Carlisle talkin' 'bout it to Ole Mistis at de breakfas' table, an' I notice Miss Cora talk mighty gay but she don' eat nuffin.

“A few nights arter dat de big house wuz full o' comp'ny, an' Miss Cora wuz movin' 'roun' dressed in black velvet an' di'mon's, an' lookin' lak a queen. Sev'ral gemmun wuz a skippin' 'roun' her, as usual, w'en Mister Gerald Faulkner wuz 'nounced an' walked in. He soon come to Miss Cora wid his ole bright smile, but w'ile she wuz monst'ous perlite to him, she hilt him off to arms' length, an' sholy friz him. She axed him how he been de pas' mont', an' 'foh he could say a word she tu'n aroun' an' smile at anurrer gemmun in sich a way as sot de li'l feller half'stracted. I see Mister Gerald tu'n a strang s'prise' look at Miss Cora an' walk away. He nuvver look at her no moh, but spoke to dis one an' dat one in his fine

han'some way, an' den I hyer him makin' his scuses to Major Carlisle fur leavin' so early, an' axed fur his hoss to be brung 'roun'. Den I see him slip outen de room quiet. Miss Cora went on talkin' as if she nuvver see nuffin, nor know nuffin; but w'en Mister Faulkner walk outen dat room, I tell you she knowed it. I had sont de order fur Mister Gerald's hoss an' he wuz come; an' I wuz at de eend o' de gal'ry lookin' at him a champin' on de bit an' a stampin' de groun', w'en I see Mister Gerald come down de steps, an' walk to'ards de hoss rack under de trees an' 'gin to onhitch him. He wuz mos' ready to mount, w'en I seed Miss Cora come outen de consuvvatory an' stan' in de shadder o' de trees close to him 'foh he sees her, an' I hyer her say mighty sof' lak,

“ ‘Are you goin' so soon?’

“ ‘He tu'n quick an' sayd,

“ ‘Why should I not go?’

“ ‘Den I hyer her answer in dat meller voice o' hern,

“ ‘Of co'se, if youse tired o' us an' purfur to go, we kin say nuthin'.

“ ‘Arter a few secon's Mister Gerald speak up an' say,

“ ‘You seemed so indif'rent to-night I thought my absence would be nuthin' to you.'

“ ‘Den Miss Cora answer,

“ ‘I wuz no moh indif’rent to you ’an you been to us for de las’ mont’.’

“ ‘I seed Mister Gerald look close at Miss Cora an’ say,

“ ‘I could not he’p mahse’f. Mah cousin, Miss Hayes, has been wid us a mont’ an’ I had to be her escort an’ couldn’ leave.’

“ ‘Wuz she yoh cousin?’ Miss Cora axed him, lookin’ up quick.

“ ‘Yes,’ says Mister Gerald, ‘mah firs’ cousin.’

“ ‘Miss Cora’s haid ’gin to droop at dat an’ she made li’l marks on de groun’ wid de toe o’ her shoe. Bymby, lookin’ up sideways at Mister Gerald, she sayd,

“ ‘Mus’ you leave so soon?’

“ ‘An’ Mister Gerald say low. but I could hyer him,

“ ‘I would love nuvver to leave you ag’in.’

“ ‘Den I see his haid ben’in’ over her, w’ile her face wuz hid. Arter w’ile I hyer him say,

“ ‘Cora, I love you wid mah whole soul; will you let me stay an’ nuvver go away?’

“ ‘Miss Cora’s haid kep’ a goin’ down, an’ he sayd ag’in,

“ ‘Will you, Cora?’

“ ‘Den I seed Miss Cora lif’ her face to his an’ I see him put his arms ’roun’ her an’ dey kiss one long kiss. Den Miss Cora say quick,

“ ‘Lemme go, somebody will see us.’

“ ‘An’ Mister Gerald say,

“ ‘I don’ keer if de whole worl’ see us. You are mine.’ An’ he kiss her ag’in an’ ag’in, w’ile his big black hoss wuz champin’ de bit an’ stampin’ de gravel.

“ ‘But bymby Miss Cora tell him she mus’ go, dat de comp’ny would be axin fur her; so arter Mister Gerald say ‘plague take de comp’ny,’ an’ he done tuk a dozen moh kisses, he toh hizse’f away, an’ rid in a gallop down de road, w’ile Miss Cora slip back th’u’ de cunsuvvatory an’ into de parlor. In a few minutes I see her in dah wid de people an’ her black eyes wuz a dancin’ an’ her cheeks wuz a blazin’ red, an’ I ’clare to gracious she wuz too putty fur anything.

“ ‘I hyer one o’ de gemmun ax her whar she git de roses in her cheeks; wuz hit de wuk o’ de Lawd or o’ man. An’ Miss Cora laugh an’ say she wouldn’ answer sich a question. Den I laugh to mahse’f, kase I knowed a thing or two.

“ ‘Arter dat, dah wuz moh kerryin’s on an’ parties an’ sich lak, an’ soon ev’ybody knowed ’bout de ’gagement.

“ ‘Well, de weddin’ day wuz ’p’inted fur Thursday, de tent’ o’ June. My Lands! whut a time o’ fixin’ up dah wuz in de big house. Dey bought noo funnicheer an’ carpets, doh whut dey had wuz

sutny fine 'nough. A lot o' de laklies' women in de qualters wuz brung up to de house to 'sist de house suvvants in de extry work. Den whut a bakin' an' a bilin' an' a cookin'! Me an' Caesar wuz sont on hossback all over de country a kerry-in' de invites to de Seymours, de Shelbys, de Carletons an' all de big folks. On top o' dat de 'lations of Ole Mahster an' Ole Mistis come all de way fum Virginny to see de mahiage. De house wuz full o' comp'ny fur days 'fore de time, an' Miss Cora wuz in an' out' 'mungst 'em happy as a bird.

“De mahiage wuz to take place on de mornin' o' de tent' o' June, an' dey wuz to go Norf on a bridal tower. Mister Gerald had gone to Noo Orleans on biz'ness an' wuz to 'rive on de nint'. He had sont two o' his trunks an' dey wuz put in de room sot apart fur him.

“On de eight' o' June, in de arternoon—My Lawd! I kin never furgit dat day—hit makes me sick to dis hour to members it. De gemmuns wuz a smokin' dey seegars on de gal'ry, an' de ladies wuz in de libra'y, ur in dey rooms, w'en we see a man gallopin' up de road lak mad. Does you know, suh, w'en I seed dat man a tearin' along, I feel down inside o' me dat sumpin dreffel gwine happen.

“I wuz on de gal'ry,—me an' Caesar—passin'

roun' some cups o' coffee w'en I see dat man tu'n in our big gate an' come a lopin' up de road dat swircled roun' th'u' de grove up to de house. I notice de gemmun put down dey cups an' seegars an' look steady at dat man. Dah had been a rain dat ev'nin an' de man's cloze wuz all splashed wid mud; an' w'en he flung hizse'f outen de saddle an' come walkin' quick to de house, I notice his hoss wuz kivered wid lather, an' trim'lin' an' blowin' fit to kill. Some o' de gemmun seem to know de man an' tuk his han' an' axed him anxious lak,

“ ‘Is anything de matter?’ ”

“ ‘An' he sayd, as solemn as de grave,

“ ‘Bad nooz, indeed.’ ”

“ ‘Den he inquested de gemmun to meet him in de parlor, an' not let Ole Mistis ur Miss Cora be dah. So w'en dey got in, dah wuz a whole clump o' ladies who done smelt trouble a'ready. Den dey all crowd 'roun' him an say,

“ ‘Fur God's sake, tell us whut's de matter.’ ”

“ ‘An' de man tuk a tillygraph outen his pocket an' read wid his voice low, an' Dinah copy hit fur me arterwards:

‘New Orleans, June 8, 1859.

Charles F. Brown,

Medfield, Miss.

Gerald Faulkner was shot and killed here to-

day. Letter by mail. Break news to the Dabneys at once. What must be done with the body?

George Ellerton.'

'As soon as de las' word done been read de gemmun say all roun' de room, My Gawd! and, Good Gawd! Den some one say, don' let Miss Cora hyer dis. Let it be broke to her gentle. An' ef I live to tell it, right dah befoh our eyes wuz Miss Cora, white as death, stan'in' in de doh' 'twixt de two parlors wid de porcher curtains fallin' bout her lak a pictur. She look at us all wid ur awful look in her eyes, an' say,

'“Whut has happen'? Is dare any trouble?”'

'“W'en she say dat, some o' de ladies put dey han'herchers to dey eyes an' cried. Nobody seem willin' to bre'k dat sweet young heart. An' so Miss Cora tuk a step for'd an' wid her han' on her breas' a clutchin' her dress she say,

'“Tell me whut has happen'.”'

'“An' ole Major Carlisle, whut wuz her uncle, come up to her an' tuk her han' an' sayd,

'“Gawd pity you, Cora. Gerald Faulkner wuz shot an' killed in Noo Orleans to-day.”'

'“Ef I live to a thousan' ye'r I kin never furgit de look Miss Cora tu'n on dat man an' de folks stan'in' roun'. She nuvver say one word, but

jes put her han's dis way over her heart, an' fell back on de floh, straight as a shingle, an' lookin' lak she wuz dead as a doh nail. Ev'body commence' runnin' hyer an' dah, callin' fur dis an' callin' fur dat, an' nobody paying no 'tention to nobody, w'en I jes drap down by her an' say,

“ ‘Oh, Miss Cora! Please, ma'am, don' tek on so. Jes speak a word to yoh poh nigger. Ain' I yoh nigger? Dis is Pomp a talkin' to you, Miss Cora. Don' you h'yer me, Miss Cora?’

“ ‘An' so I jes wen' on, a wringin' mah han's lak I wuz stracted, an' so I wuz. But Miss Cora nuvver say one word, nur open her eyes; but lay all white an' still wid bofe han's over her heart, jes so.

“ ‘De nex' t'ing I know Ole Mistis wuz in dah, an' I tell you, suh, she riz to de 'casion. She wuz awful kam, but she gin orders roun' dah dat minded me o' Ole Mahster. She had Miss Cora move right up in her room. Some o' de ole fam'ly frien's—Ginnul Sinclair, an' Judge Curtis, an' Major Carlisle, Ole Mistis's brudder, lif' up de poh crush' chile, an' toted her up stairs wid tears a drappin' down dare cheeks as dey went. Den Ole Mistis had de doh shet, an' had Miss Cora rubbed an' fanned, an' sont one o' de suvvants a tearin' on hossback arter a doctor.

“ ‘Twuz mos’ a hour ’fore Miss Cora open her eyes, an’ whut you reckon she say? She call her Ma to her, an’ as Ole Miss’ ben’ over an’ say wid trem’lin’ lips,

“ ‘Whut’s de mattah, daughter. whut kin we do for you?’

“ ‘Miss Cora look up wid dat same ’spression I have seen in a deer’s eyes w’en he been shot, an’ say,

“ ‘Mother, I want his body ship hyer at once, an’ buried in de chu’chyard.’

“ ‘Ole Mistis, wid de tears runnin’ down her cheeks, noddod her haid an’ say, wid a choke in her voice:

“ ‘Hit shall be done, my chile.’

“ ‘Ole Miss’ no sooner sayd dis an’ riz to go, w’en Miss Cora put her two han’s over her heart, jes lak she done befoh, as if it wuz breakin’, an’ den wid a wail dat dey all hyerd down stairs, an’ broke us all down ag’in, she cry,

“ ‘O, my poor heart. It will sholy break. O, Lawd, have mercy on me.’

“ ‘Den her Ma an’ sev’ral o’ de ladies run back to her an’ coo over her, an’ pet her an’ say,

“ ‘Yes, darlin’, He will have mercy on you. He will help you, dear.’ An’ you hyer me, suh, Miss Cora done gone off ag’in in one o’ dem dead faints.

I wuz stan'in' at de doh w'en all dis wuz gwine on, wid mah heart all bus' to pieces, an' cryin' fit to kill. I sho love Miss Cora, suh.

"Bymby de ladies fotch Miss Cora to ag'in wid dey han' rubbin' an' smellin' salt.. Den de Doctor come an' gin her sumpin to quiet her, an' lef' d'rections fur de ladies to leave de room. So dey all wen' down stairs, an' Ole Miss' went out to gin some moh orders, an' dah wuz Miss Cora layin' white an' still on de baid, an' her eyes closed, an' nobody in de room but Dinah, an' me outside in de hall a settin' on de floh wid mah haid ag'in de doh, an' mah tears a drippin' on de carpet. I speck I mus' grieve louder'n I think, w'en I hyer Miss Cora's voice, sof' an' low,

" 'Who's dat at de doh, Dinah?'

" 'An' Dinah say,

" ' 'Tain' nobody but Pompey, Miss Cora!'

" 'Den I hyer Miss Cora say,

" 'Tell him he kin come in fur a minute.'

" 'W'en I tip in an' see Miss Cora layin' in de baid wid her face as white as de sheet, her black hair flung down on de pillow an' her eyes burnin' lak fire wuz inside, I tell you, mah breas' wuz dat sore I could skasely draw mah bref. W'en Miss Cora hyerd me comin' in she tu'n dem bu'nin' eyes on me an' retch out her putty white han' an' say,

“ ‘Dear ole fai’ful Pompey, ain’ you sorry fur your poh Mistis?’

“Den it look lak de whole t’ing rush over her ag’in, an’ puttin’ her han’s over her heart, she gin one o’ dem cries—siĉh a lonesome cry—dat I ’clare to gracious I thought it would sholy bus’ my heart. Dinah wuz cryin’ at de foot o’ de baid, an’ I fell down by de side o’ de baid a sayin’,

“ ‘Miss Cora, fur de Lawd’s sake don’ tek on so. You gwine kill yohse’f an’ all us too.’

“By dis time Ole Miss’ an’ some o’ de ladies come a runnin’ up de stairs in de room, kase dey all hyerd Miss Cora w’en she gin dat lonesome cry, an’ dah wuz Dinah cryin’ an’ me a cryin’ wid mah haid on de carpet by de side o’ de baid, an’ Miss Cora lookin’ lak she wuz done dead ag’in. Ole Miss sont me outen de room wid a message, an’ as I come down stairs I see de ladies an’ de gemmuns bofe wuz a crying an’ a usin’ dey hankers pow’ful.

“I tell you, suh, Ole Miss’ she riz to de ’casion. In ten minutes she wuz down stairs ag’in, an’ sont off orders lak a Cap’n. She writ a tillygraph to de gemmun whut sont de nooz, an’ anurrer to her lawyer in Noo Orleans, telling him to have de body emba’m an’ sont right on de firs’ train. She say in de tillygraph to ’spatch her full ’tic’lars o’

Mister Faulkner's death at her 'spense. I hyerd her read it to ole Judge Curtis an' Major Carlisle. Den she inquested one o' de gemmun at de house to take de 'spatch to Medfield an' sen' back de answers by safe han's; an' in les'n five minutes we hyer his hoss flyin' down de road. She sont a message to de man she hire to keep de chu'chyard all right, 'bout diggin' de grave. She writ to Ginnul Faulkner an' tol' him de sad nooz an' 'formed him dat Miss Cora wants de fun'ral fum de house, an' crave de priv'lege dat de body be buried back o' dey chu'ch whar she could see de grave frequen' an' tek keer o' hit. Yes, suh, Ole Miss' did all dem t'ings an' moh, too. She riz to de 'casion dat night, she sholy did.

"Dar wuz mighty li'l res' fur us in de big house dat night. Hit look lak folks wuz a comin' an' a gwine all de time. An' go to de doh w'en you would, you could hyer de hoss's hoofs, er cliperty-cliperty-cliperty up an' down de road.

"Den nobody keered to go to baid tell dey hyer fum de tillygraphs whut Ole Miss' sont to Noo Orleens. De gemmun smoke an' talk on de gal'ry a w'ile an' den come whar de ladies wuz in de libra'y an de parlor. Ev'ybody wuz onres'less lak.

"Hit wuz jes ha'f pas' twelve o'clock w'en I hyer de big gate slam, an' a hoss a gallopin' up de

av'noo an' stop in front o' de house. De gemmun all crowd on de gal'ry an' watch de man whut fotch de message fum de office as he gin it to Major Carlisle. I seed de Major gin de man twenty dollars whut Ole Miss' tol' him to han' him w'en he come. Right dah on de front po'ch, wid de ceilin' lamp shinin' on de comp'ny, an' de man stan'in' on de groun' by his hoss dat wuz all in a lather an' sweat lak de urrer hoss whut brung de firs' message,—right dah Major Carlisle, wid his fingers a trem'lin', tore de yaller 'velope open an' read de 'spatch. I disremembers de zack words, but hit run sorter dis way:

“ ‘Altercation wid young lawyer. Lawyer struck. Faulkner challenge to duel. Met in ole fiel' nigh de city. Faulkner fell at de firs' fire shot th'u' de haid, an' died instant. Body bein' emba'm. Ship early to-morrer.’

“De nex' day look lak hit never would end. Hosses an' kerriges kep' a comin' an' a gwine. Niggers wuz a flyin' roun' an' de white folks whisperin' bout de house. W'en de night come de grave been dug an' de fun'ral notices sont all over de country.

“Arter supper, de gemmun sot on de po'ch a talkin' in low voices lak dey did de night befoh. At nine o'clock dey come in de libra'y 'mungst de ladies an' ev'ybody wuz talkin' low.

“Bymby I hyer de hall clock strak ten. Hit sounded vahy moanful. I wuz walkin’ jes arter dat, ’long side o’ de house to’ard de front w’en hyer come Dinah runnin’ lak one ’stracted an’ ketched hol’ o’ me an’ sayd,

“ ‘De huss is comin’ up de road.’

“I look an’ dah sho ’nough comin’ up de av’noo wuz two black hosses drawin’ de huss. De ha’f moon wuz a peepin’ th’u’ de trees an’ I could see de big plumes on de huss a wavin’ an’ a noddin’. Dinah gin one skeered look, an’ sayin’,

“ ‘Hit’s bad luck to meet a huss,’ she lit out an’ lef me.

“I come to de front an’ foun’ dat ev’ybody in de libra’y had hyerd de wheels an’ had come out on de gal’ry to meet de body. Dah wuz sev’ral buggies an’ kerriges wid some gemmun frien’s wid de huss. In a li’l w’ile dey brung Mister Gerald in his fine casket into de back parlor.

“I sot on de steps an’ cried. Dis wuz de vahy night he wuz to ’rive to be mahied an’ hyer he wuz done brung home in a huss, dead an’ boxed up in a coffin. Hyer he wuz to be mahied de nex’ day, an’ Lawd-a-Mussy, he wuz buried de vahy day an’ hour he wuz to hev been mahied.

“De whole country come to de fun’ral. I never seed so many kerriges an’ hosses in mah life. De Sinclairs an’ de Seymours an’ Curtis’s an’ Mor-

daunts an' ev'ybody come. Ginnul Faulkner an' his two daughters wuz dah, but dey nuvver got outen dey kerrige. Miss Cora kep' to her baid an' nuvver see Mister Gerald, an' nuvver went to de fun'ral.

"Bout two weeks arter de fun'ral Miss Cora walk over to de chu'ch to see de grave. She gin her orders dat no one go wid her, but Ole Miss' made me foller her, an' stan' off, unbeknownst to Miss Cora, to tek keer o' her ef she need me.

"W'en she come to de grave I seed her fling herself right down on it an' gin dat same lonesome cry. I don' t'ink Miss Cora move fur one hour, so I gits up an' creep close an' say,

" 'Miss Cora, fur de Lawd's sake don' kill us all. You is sholy gwine do it ef you tek on so.'

"Den she lif herse'f up an' tu'n to me an' say,

" 'Pompey, mah heart is broke. You mus' all be patient wid me a li'l w'ile till God gives me strength.'

"She no more 'n say dat w'en she th'owed herse'f on de grave ag'in wid her arms 'bout it, a cryin' out,

" 'O, Gerald! O my darlin'! my darlin'! Can't you speak to me? Won't you ever come back to me? O, my God! my God! how can I stan' it?'

" 'Fore I could say a thing I look up an' hyer wuz Ole Miss' comin', an' down de road dah wuz

de kerrige. Ole Miss' sot down by de grave an' took Miss Cora in her arms, laid her haid on her breas', an' kiss her, an' talk to her soothin' fur a long time. Bymby dey got up wid me follerin' 'em, an' got in de kerrige an' druv back to de house.

“Arter dat Miss Cora order dem foh urns you see yonder, an' dat i'on cheer an' w'en she got stronger she use to come hyer ev'y day an' sit one an' two hours by dat grave. Fur nigh on to two years I don' think Miss Cora miss a day comin' to dat grave an' sittin' in dat i'on cheer. She gin orders dat nobody foller her, but ole Miss' made me go quite frequent at firs' kase she feel oneasy. Hit's been now 'bout thirty year, an' I kin see Miss Cora yit, as plain as if it wuz yistiddy, in her black dress settin' in dat cheer wid her cheek on her han' an' her eyes fixed on dat stone at her feet, whut kivered de man she love.”

* * * * *

As Pompey finished his story the sun was near the western horizon. A few rays of golden glory touched the tree tops, and the broken summit of the church tower; but the woods around were filled with dusky shadows. The church looked more ruinous than ever, and the lonely tomb and vacant chair beside it were invested with a melan-

choly, intensified an hundred fold by the narration of the story of these sundered lives.

We both stood silently looking at the sepulcher with the four urns and solitary chair, all of which were plainly visible from our position. It required but little effort on the part of the mind to imagine we saw the black robed young woman once more in her lonely vigil, who had so often and long sat there in other years, by the side of her dead lover.

Again the "caw-caw" of a crow fell on my ear as he winged his midair flight above the grove, toward his night roost in the distant forest. The mournful note brought to mind the thought of Poe's Raven, and that bird's dreary utterance of "Nevermore."

Taking the reins of my horse in my hand, and preceded by Pompey, I walked down the path, through, and out of the grove, to the better lighted high road which had been left a couple of hours before. As I placed a shining silver dollar in the negro's hand, off went his ragged hat while from his lips came the single word,

"Sah!"

This I knew from long acquaintance with the negro in the South to be the abbreviation of a fervent "thank you, sir."

Mounting my horse I noticed my companion of the afternoon, as, with pleased expression, he turned the coin over several times and looked at it from various angles. Glancing up he said,

“Dinah will sho’ be proud ter git dis dollar.”

“So,” interrupted I, “you got Dinah, and Caesar didn’t.”

“You dun tole the truf now, honey. Dat nigger Caesar git Dinah? Shoo! He nuvver stan’ no-whar side o’ me,” and Pompey brought out a “kee-yaw-yaw” that scared the birds out of the hedge.

“I suppose you brought her to terms in some way.”

“Dat I did, Boss. Dar I wuz, a losin’ my appy-tite bouten’ her, tell I jes med up my min’ I wuzn’ gwine to stan’ it no longer. So I pent her up in de corner o’ de pantry one night an’ axed her ef she gwine to mah’y me. She tole me I bettah put some moh ice in de cooler foh Ole Miss git arter me. An’ I sayd a yaller gal name’ Dinah, dun funnish me wid all de ice I wants fur my cooler an’ ev’y urrer cooler I ever seed. Den she try to run pas’ me, an’ I kotch her as she go. She pull desprit an’ say she got to comb Miss Cora’s hair. An’ I say Miss Cora dun been in baid er whole hour. Den Dinah say, lookin’ out de corners o’ her eyes at me,

“ ‘What you say you want, Pompey?’

“ ‘An’ I say, grippin’ her tighter,

“ ‘I want you.’

“ ‘An’ she laugh and say,

“ ‘I sholy think you got me without axin. Ain’t you?’ An’ I says,

“ ‘I means fur life. Won’t you, Dinah?’

“ ‘An’ she bust out laughin’ an’ say,

“ ‘Yes, she reckon so, as hit cain’ be hep’t.’

“ ‘Den I gin her a kiss dat she say soun’ all over de house, an’ she brek away fum me. I axed her whut meks her pester an’ aggervate me so all dis pas’ time, an’ she laugh an’ show dem white teef an’ say, she love to devil me.

“ ‘O, yes, suh, me an’ Dinah dun been mah’ied mos’ thirty ye’r.’”

“ ‘I am glad to hear it,’ I replied, “ ‘but there is one thing I wish to know before I leave you, and that is, what has become of Miss Cora Dabney. Is she still living?’ ”

“ ‘Yes, suh, dat she is, an’ mah’ied an’ got three chillun.’”

“ ‘Well, that surprises me,’ I said, “ ‘I thought she would have been true to the memory of the man in the grave.’ ”

“ ‘Lor’, suh, Miss Cora never want to mah’y. Her heart is right out dar, in dat tomb, dis blessed day.’ ”

“Why did she marry, then,” I asked.

“Well, suh,” replied the negro, leaning upon the fence with one arm on the top rail, “Does you speck de single gemmun gwine let sich a fine woman as Miss Cora scape dey fingers ef dey kin he’p it? Naw, sah, preachers an’ lawyers an’ doctors all tuk arter her; but Miss Cora don’ pay no ’tention ’tall to none uv ’em.

“Bymby a monst’ous fine gemmun come fum Ole Virginny. Ole Miss’ knowed all his folks. Dey wuz de Dashleighs whut live on de Jeems River, an’ wuz awful rich. His county sont him to de Legislatur’ an’ he hilt his own wid de bes’ uv ’em fur two y’er. Den he tuk hizse’f off to Noo York an’ sot up in law up dah. He had some big case or nuther whut brung him out hyer to Jackson an’ he run out to see Ole Miss’ an’ Miss Cora, an’ he sholy got a nurrer case on his han’s de instan’ he see Miss Cora. He come w’en Mister Gerald Faulkner done been kilt moh’n a y’er. I see fum de firs’ he wuz pow’ful tuk wid Miss Cora; but she scacely notice him, ’cep’n to be perlite case her Ma knowed all his folks. He wuz monst’ous nice to her an’ brung her books fum town, an’ flowers an’ music an’ all sich. Den he tol’ her pleasan’ things an’ try to mek her furgit her sorrer. He sutny work fai’ful on dat noo case o’ hisn. He wuz’n lak Major Sinclair, whut wanted to charge

right over Miss Cora lak he done in de Rig'ment; but Mistah Dashleigh sot down fur a rig'lar siege.

“He had to go back to Noo York fur a w'ile, but bress yoh soul, honey, dat Jackson bus'ness done git so 'portan' he had to come right back. I sholy laugh 'bout dat Jackson bus'ness, kaze he spen' moh time a comin' an' a gwine to Miss Cora den he gin to dat Jackson town.

“I speck six mont's done gone by w'en he tole Miss Cora he love her. I nuvver hyerd him, but Dinah did. She wuz dustin' de funnicher in de back parlor w'en she hyer him 'spress hizse'f dat way. Dinah tol' me 'bout it, an' say Miss Cora gin him a 'No' dat sont him a double summerset. But shoo! dat never stop dat man. He jes stay away a couple o' days nussin' his woun's an' come ag'in at Miss Cora jes as perlite as ever, bringin' her some moh books an' flowers an' sich lak.

“ 'Twarn' long arter dis, dat Ole Mistis' health commence decavin' an' den she died, an' Miss Cora done lef' by herse'f in de big house. Howsomever, one o' her aunts fum Old Virginny come down an' stay wid her.

“All dat time Mister Dashleigh make hay w'ile de sun shine. He hope Miss Cora in her bus'ness an' rid to dif'rent places fur her. I notice he nuvver tire Miss Cora lak Major Sinclair did. He

knowed when to come an' how long to stay. Den he allers wuz so kin' an' perlite. Bymby some o' Miss Cora's frien's an' 'lations say to her,

“ ‘Cora chile, whut mek you live sich a lone-some life? Why don' you mah'y Mister Dashleigh whut's dying wid love fur you?’ ”

“So hit all come 'roun'. One day w'en Mister Faulkner been daid an' buried two ye'r, Mister Dashleigh speak ag'in to Miss Cora 'bout his 'stressed state o' feelin's fur her. Dis time I hyerd him. He axed Miss Cora to walk in de cunsuvvatory wid him, an' I stop to tie my shoe close to de vahy doh whar I hyer Major Sinclair tek on so in de 'spressin' o' his feelin's dat night. So I hyer Mister Dashleigh tell Miss Cora, as sollum as w'en he make dem big talks to de Judge an' de ju'y in de Cou't House, dat he love her as he nuvver love anurrer woman, an' dat if she be his wife he'd be de proudes' man in de worl' an' try his bes' to mek her happy.

“Arter dat I nuvver hyer nothin' fur full two minutes. 'Peared lak dey mus' hyer my heart thumpin' 'hin' de flower shelves. Den Miss Cora say, slow an' sof',

“ ‘Would you want to mah'y a woman w'en her heart is buried in de grave o' anurrer man?’ ”

“An' Mister Dashleigh answer quick dat he

wuz willin' to 'gin wid her respec' an' dat he wuz sho he could git her love arter while.

“Den I hyer Miss Cora gin a long sigh, an' lookin' th'u' de bushes I see 'em stan'in' apart, he wid his arms folded lookin' at her, an' she lookin' down at a ring Mister Faulkner gin her, an' she wuz tu'nin' it 'roun' an' 'roun' on her finger.

“At las' she look up an' say dat she respec' him, an' hev a jinnywine frien'ship fur him,—but she doan love him. Dat her heart wuz buried in de grave o' Gerald Faulkner. Dat if he wuz content to tek her dis way she would mah'y him. Den she hilt out her han' to him, an' he drapt on one knee, lak Major Sinclair, an' press' her han' to his lips. Dat wuz all. Den dey walk ouden de cunsuvvatory togerrerr. I tell you, 'twuz sorter cool lak. 'Twarn' lak dat monlight night I see her haid drap on Mister Gerald's shoulder, an' he arms go 'roun' her, an' two folks look lak one. Naw, suh, 'twarn' lak w'en Dinah 'cepted me in de pantry. Dinah made out she want to git away, but I koteh her vahy easy foh she retch de doh. Well, women folks is cur'ous, anyhow, ain't dey, Boss?” and out came another hearty kee-yaw-yaw.

“I suppose,” said I, interrupting him in order

to bring him back to the story, "that they finally got married?"

"Yes, suh, dey wuz mahied in a few mont's. Dey had a vahy quiet weddin' dey call it, jes a few o' de neighbors wuz dar,—de Seymours, de Shelbys an' de Carletons. De Faulkners wuz all in Europe. Arter de mahiage seh'mony, dey lef' de same day. De big house wuz shot up an' hit done stayed shot up ev'y sence."

"Do you mean to say that they moved away and never came back?"

"Yes, sah, das so. Dey live now in Noo York City. Miss Cora never been back hyer but once,—dat wuz nigh on to fifteen ye'r ago an' moh. She an' Mister Dashleigh an' de chillun come out fum Medfiel' in kerriges to spen' a week. Dey had writ dey wuz comin' an' we had de house aired fum top to bottom, fires burnin' in de rooms an' ev'ything lookin' bright an' cheerful.

"W'en de kerrige driv up to de doh dah wuz me an' Dinah 'rayed in our bes' cloze to welcome 'em. De firs' thing dat Dinah did wuz to kiss de chillun, an' den she flung her arms 'roun' Miss Cora an' bus' out cryin'. Miss Cora say to her,

" 'Is dis de bes' welcome you got fur me?' but I notice her own voice wuz ur shakin'. Den she

hilt out her han' to me an' say, jes lak her ole se'f,
“ ‘Hyer is my fai'ful Pompey.’

“ ‘Twuz all I could do to keep fum disgracin' myse'f an' bustin' out lak Dinah, but I hilt in, doh de tears wuz runnin' down my face.

“ ‘Peared to me dat Miss Cora wuz han'somer 'n ever, but her black eyes look lak sumpin' wuz hurtin' her heart.

“ ‘De chillun wuz soon rompin' over de house, an' Mister Dashleigh rid out over de plantation. Prezny I miss Miss Cora. She warn' no whar to be foun' in de house. I had to go over to my cabin on de side o' de hill yonder fur sumpin', an' com-in' back I tuk a nigh cut th'u' de orchid an' riz de hill whar de woods roun' de big house come down to de side fence. As I glance up I see Miss Cora leanin' gin de fence an' lookin' cross de fiel' to'ard dis chu'ch grove we jes lef'. She nuvver see me, so I squat down in de weeds an' watch her. Her arm wuz on de top rail, her cheek on her han' an' her eyes wuz fixed on de grove. I knowed whut she come down dar fur an' who she wuz thinkin' 'bout. I knowed she wuzn' thinkin' 'bout de man who wuz ridin' over de plantation, but 'bout de man who wuz lyin' in de col' grave 'hin' de chu'ch. She look so lonesome in her black hat an' dress, way down dar in de woods

by herse'f dat I thought my heart would sholy break. 'Peared to me she never move fur a ha'f hour, but kep' lookin' to'ards de ole chu'ch as if she couldn' tear herse'f away. Bymby I see her put her face on her arm a while; den she look up at de sky a minute, an' den walk slow up th'u' de woods to de big house.

“Dat night she nuvver come down to supper, an' Mister Dashleigh say dat instid o' stayin' a week, his wife had conclude to return de nex' day, an' dey would all leave in de mawnin'.

“An' so dey did. De kerriges wuz brung out, an' dey all got in an' driv off. De las' 'memb'ance o' Miss Cora dat I has wuz her big black sorrerful eyes at de kerrige winder, while she retch out her putty white han' an' say,

“ ‘Good-bye, dear ole Pompey.’

“Den dey driv off down de road, whilst me an' Dinah wuz lef' stan'in' by de front steps.

“Bymby Dinah say to me,

“ ‘Whut mek 'em leave in sich a hurry? Ain' de house fine 'nough sence dey been to Noo York?’ An' I say to Dinah,

“ ‘De house ain' got nuffin' 'tall to do wid it.' Den arter I 'lowed Dinah to coax me some time, I up an' tol' her whar I seed Miss Cora de ev'nin' befoh, lookin' to'ards Mister Gerald Faulkner's grave.

“Soon as I say dat, Dinah sot right down on de font steps an’, flingin’ her white ap’on over her haid, she bus’ out cryin’ an’ goes to rockin’ herse’f back’ard and for’ard an’ sayin’,

“ ‘Poh chil’, poh dear honey, poh broken heart-ed lam’, ’tell I couldn’ see nuffin down de road ur up de road ur nowhar else; an’ I sot down on de steps by Dinah an’ we cry togerrerr.’ ”

* * * * *

My own eyes were full at the simple recital of the affectionate servant before me. Yet I had one more question to ask him.

“You say that Miss Cora, or rather, Mrs. Dashleigh, never comes back. Has she forgotten you and Dinah and your love and past services to her?”

The negro instantly straightened himself, and with a tender look in his eyes as he glanced toward the “big house” and then back at me, replied,

“Miss Cora furgit me an’ Dinah? Naw, sir-ree! Why, suh, arter de war close, an’ we wuz all sot free, Miss Cora gin us dat house on de side o’ de hill yonder an’ twenty acres o’ groun’. Den she sot me up wid a hoss an’ a mule an’ two cows an’ lots o’ urrer things. An’ dat ain’ all. Dar ain’ a Chris’mus comes, suh, but she ’members us wid a box wid things in it fur me an’ Dinah.

Naw, suh, Miss Cora doan furgit us. She is big hearted lak all de Dabneys. Doan you think dese is my bes' cloze. I got firs' class cloze in de chis' at home whut Miss Cora done sont me; an' so is Dinah. Naw, suh, Miss Cora doan furgit her ole niggers. De Lawd know she doan."

Taking the hand of the faithful and grateful negro, I bade him farewell and rode away in the direction of Medfield.

The sun was now completely down. The shadows were filling the valley and stealing over the broad sedge covered fields. I had still eight miles to ride, but could not resist the impulse to stop a few minutes and look back from the top of a neighboring eminence.

I could see Pompey making his way toward his cabin that sat now in full view before me on the side of the hill. He had resumed the hymn I had interrupted and was singing his way up the path which led to his humble home. A blue line of smoke was ascending from the chimney, proclaiming the evening meal, while a female, whom I supposed to be Dinah, was standing in front of the house and looking down the road for the approach of her tardy husband.

From this scene I turned my eyes to the Big House, which sat as Pompey described, "all shot up," on the forest crowned slope. How desolate it

looked with its closed doors and windows, and empty, silent yard! I thought of how the woods waved in richest green about it in the spring and summer, and no one was there of the old household to enjoy its shade and beauty. In the fall and winter I could imagine how the winds tossed the yellow leaves about and roared through the stripped and creaking branches, and the sound would be like a wail over the bright departed days, and for the vanished forms which once lived and loved in this forsaken dwelling, but now, were gone forever.

My eyes then fell last on the dark grove nearer to me in which were the ruined church, the graveyard, and the lonely tomb with its four urns and iron chair sitting empty by its side.

Then my mind took a swift flight to a far distant city where a bereaved heart was doubtless trying to meet the duties and burdens of life bravely and faithfully, and yet bearing all the while a mental load which she could not, and would not, speak of to another. As I thought of her I said to myself:

“The tomb in the churchyard is lonely and forsaken, but not forgotten. The man who sleeps there under the sod is actually glorified and made to live on by the beautiful undying love of this queenly woman.”

It was with an effort I finally turned away from the contemplation of scenes which held me with such power. In a little while the gloaming merged into night, and under the quiet stars, along hedge-lined roads, and through fields of yellow whispering sedge, I rode silently and thoughtfully back to Medfield.

THE BALLANTYNES

The Ballantynes

I

MR. BALLANTYNE

The naming of the children by his wife had been a great grief of mind to Mr. Ballantyne. He had regarded the choice and application of proper cognomens to his immediate descendants as one of the indisputable rights pertaining to the male head of the family. He was equally convinced of his superior taste in such a selection, when lo! Mrs. Ballantyne took the whole matter out of his hands, or rather head, and named them all.

Mr. Ballantyne's original expectation had been that he would be blessed with three sons and as many daughters. His intention, in keeping with the anticipation, was to name the girls, Faith, Hope and Charity, and the boys were to be called after three great generals, or three of the prophets, or three of the patriarchs; he himself inclining to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Two things utterly broke into the plan of Mr. Ballantyne, who, by the way, was very much given

to day dreaming. One of these colliding facts was that the hoped for trios did not materialize, but couples appeared instead. So he had more names than children.

The other cause has already been intimated in the firm will and way of Mrs. Ballantyne. She scouted at both ideas; saying if the girls were named in the order her husband mentioned, even granting they were three in number, yet it would prove a positive contradiction of Scripture, which plainly declares that the greatest of the three is charity; when the very opposite would be the case in their family, for the smallest of their trio would be Charity. Then, she argued, as they had only two girls, and should they call them Faith, and Hope, everybody would be asking for Charity; this, to say the least, would give an unfinished air to the family, besides entailing the constant confession that they had no Charity. As for naming the boys after the patriarchs, she would let Mr. Ballantyne know that she did not propose to make herself ridiculous to the neighborhood by standing in the back door every day and calling out "Abraham! Abraham!"

But this was not all that actuated the mother of the Ballantyne children in her decision. Being of a poetic nature, a highly sentimental turn of mind, and fond of novels of the love-sick order,

she in the fulness of her heart had named her first daughted Amanda Malvina and her second received the gorgeous appellation of Seraphina Clementina, the heroine in a "yellow back" which had greatly impressed her. As for the boys, she had them christened Walter Scott and Oliver Goldsmith. This, as has been said, was quite an affliction to the father, but as he was an individual of a buoyant temperament, as well as of a very forgetful mind, he soon became reconciled.

Mr. Ballantyne was quite a character in his way. Besides being a kind of mechanical genius, he was a fair chemist, and always peering into the secrets of the one and laboring on the strangest contrivances as to the other.

There was no need for him to be handling saws, planes, gimlets, screw drivers, crucibles, retorts, etc., as the Ballantyne income was a good one from two swamp plantations. But the man had the gifts in him, and so fitted up in a wing of his house two rooms, one a perfect carpenter's and tinker's shop, and the other, a regular chemical laboratory. When not in one, he was in the other, and when in neither, he could be found sitting on an iron settee on his front gallery lost in a brown study, with legs crossed, walking stick balanced on the fore finger of his right hand, and gazing fixedly over the rim of his spectacles through the tree-

shaded lawn, beyond the gate, and down the road, at—nothing!

In these reveries, he was usually wrestling with some chemical or mechanical problem. He had turned out a few patents that nobody ever used, wrote some learned pamphlets which nobody ever read, while it was well understood that he was in full pursuit and perfectly confident about obtaining the secret of Perpetual Motion.

During Mr. Ballantyne's intense reflections or reveries, it was very difficult to arouse him. For years the family had realized that the dining room bell was an inglorious failure, when it came to summoning him to a meal. It required repeated cries close to his ear, and sometimes very hearty shakings of the shoulder, before the abstracted man could recall his wandering spirit, center his thoughts on objects near him and adjust himself to relations and duties pertaining to this present world and life. His far-away absent-minded "Humph!"—"Hey!"—"What did you say?"—"H-u-m-p-h-?", while very entertaining to the outsider, was anything but amusing to members of the family. The arousing of Mr. Ballantyne from one of his spells of abstraction, was like recovering a man from a swoon, and sometimes almost equal to the resuscitating of a person who had been drowned. Then, like as not when Mr. Ballan-

tyne was restored, and got it into his head that his presence was desired at the breakfast or dinner table, he would walk in and sit down with his hat on, and straightway forget to eat, while staring fixedly at the castors or out of the window at the distant horizon. Even when he ate, it was evident that he did not know what he was putting into his mouth. It was also noticeable that after one of these profound spells of thought Mr. Ballantyne would be unusually busy with his tools in his little shop, or there would be heard faint explosions in the laboratory, followed by the most indescribable and villainous odors, that would permeate the whole house. Mrs. Ballantyne protested in vain, saying that "she just knew that Mr. Ballantyne was going to blow himself and the whole family up some fine morning!" Why she selected the morning for the explosion, and a fine morning at that, no one could tell. Her prophecy often amused her friends, but never seemed to affect her husband. It is questionable whether he heard what she said, for he would be lost in thought before she reached that portion of the stereotyped speech, which bore reference to the family excursion through midair, with himself as a kind of engineer.

II

MRS. BALLANTYNE

Mrs. Ballantyne was ten years younger than her husband, and a well preserved woman of forty. When a young lady, she was quite a belle, and noted for her beauty. There was a tradition in the family, which she saw to did not perish, that when a blue-eyed, golden-haired girl of eighteen, she was standing one day on her father's verandah, and a gentleman in passing happened to look up, and as he saw this vision of blue and gold enswathed in a snow white summer dress, he at once, becoming neglectful of his steps, stumbled and fell flat upon the pavement, while the words were fairly knocked out of him:

“Heavens! what a beauty!”

When Mrs. Ballantyne related this twenty, thirty and even forty years afterward, and to auditors who had frequently heard the pavement narration before, it required faithful memories of Chesterfield's teachings, and the deeper lesson of the Golden Rule, to summon up certain convinced and responsive looks, as the eye took note of the washed out blue of the eye, the thinness and grayness of the quandom golden locks, and the peculiar tinge of yellow which appears in the countenance at certain stages of life.

These more deeply marked features of increasing age of course came later, but Mrs. Ballantyne fought from the beginning most faithfully against the vanguard of the invading years; and so, by wearing ringlets on the side of her face; and retaining the same large loop earrings which she had jingled at sixteen; and by powdering, painting, frilling and furbelowing; by avoiding strong lights, and using crimson curtains on the windows and red shades on the lamp, she carried on quite a successful war against Time, and looked at least five years younger than she was.

One rule of this good lady was never to leave her couch before ten in the morning; and she had not been known to breakfast with the family for fifteen years. She began to arise at about nine o'clock; when sitting up in bed she dressed her hair, and worked on her complexion and countenance in various ways. At half past nine, she received her morning meal, consisting of tea, toast and broiled bird or chicken. As she ate slowly and stopped to look at herself quite frequently with a hand glass by her side, and also cast a number of earnest glances in a large mirror that confronted her on the wall, the breakfast lasted from a half to three quarters of an hour. At eleven o'clock, being arrayed for the day, she glided into the parlor, and wrote poetry; and at

noon sang love ballads in a weak, little, quavering voice, while accompanying herself on a thin toned piano.

Mrs. Ballantyne was quite a faithful church goer in her way. At eleven on the Sabbath, when the last bell would be ringing, she would begin to get ready. By a quarter to twelve, she swept out of her front gate, picked her dainty way along the primitive pavements of the village, and reached the church about twelve, when the congregation was rising to sing the doxology. For years she scarcely varied five minutes in the time of her arrival. If the preacher happened to expound a little longer than thirty minutes, she obtained his "last thought" or "one word more." But most of the time, the sermon had been concluded, so that her soul, for a great part of her life, had for its nourishment, the doxology, and the benediction, both very good indeed in their way, but not intended of Heaven to be the main pabulum of the spirit.

In days not the Sabbath, when Mrs. Ballantyne's hair had been arranged, breakfast eaten, poem written and ballads played, she was then ready to notice her children. At such a time, if they passed through the hall, and as it happened often in a most neglected condition of face, hands, and garments, she would call to them, dart a lov-

ing glance upon them, and say in a roguish manner, while shaking her ringlets and loop earrings:

“Come straight here to your Ma-zah.”

Just why Mrs. Ballantyne fastened the peculiar attachment of “zah” to “ma” would be difficult to tell. It was perhaps in affectionate playfulness, a kind of pet term; but it was noticeable she never used it until the hair arrangement, breakfast, poem, and ballad, had all been attended to. Then she would relax, descend, unbend, and pressing one of the young Ballantyne’s to her side would ask:

“Do you love your Ma-zah?”

The molasses streaked child would on some occasions, while rendering an affirmative answer, grant a sticky embrace and kiss to his mother, who would cry “Heavens!” go to rubbing her cheek or lawn dress with her handkerchief, and say:

“Pack yourself off this instant to Kitty and tell her I say to wash your face and put on a clean apron.”

Off would shoot the young hopeful, but not to Kitty; nor did the mother ever follow to see if her commands had been obeyed.

Sometimes, when unusually gracious, she would say:

“Run and kiss your Pa-zah.”

But “Pa-zah,” that is, Mr. Ballantyne, would

likely as not be in one of his brown studies in the iron settee on the porch, and a kiss aimed at and implanted on his cheek, nose or partially bald head, no more affected him than it would have stirred a man who was sound asleep, or had been knocked senseless.

Fortunately for the children, when Mr. Ballantyne was in one of his spells of thought, Mrs. Ballantyne would be herself, so to speak; and when she would be composing a poem and mooning around with her eyes floating in a kind of mist, he would come down from the stars and walk on earth awhile. This happy arrangement, which must have been providential, kept the children from being more than half orphans at a time. Nevertheless, there were days when there was a conjunction of planets, and both would wear a dazed look, he struggling with some mechanical or chemical problem, and she undergoing the mental birth pangs of a poem. These were the times when the servants and children could do what they would, and no more notice be taken of their confusion and uproar than the average American citizen in his business absorbed life bestows on electrical storms raging ninety millions of miles away on the face of the Sun.

The breakfast or dinner hour of the family, once having been beheld by an outsider, would never

be forgotten. It required several servants to wait on the children in their early days, as they fussed, stormed, bawled, and had their way generally, while Mr. Ballantyne, wrapped in meditation, gazed at the castors and seemed perfectly oblivious of the uproar. If it was the morning meal, Mrs. Ballantyne at that moment would be sitting up in bed two or three rooms away complacently surveying in a hand mirror her completed ringlets and complexion; and if it was the dinner hour, she posed at the foot of the table a vision of lilac and purple ribbons, and looked in smiling indifference upon the whole clamorous scene before her; that is, if she saw it at all. Sometimes there were indications that a poem was on the docks, and again there were signs which led to the suspicion that the mistress of the mansion was entertaining imaginary company.

There were occasions in the domestic reign of Mrs. Ballantyne that were specially prized by her, and where she who had merely sparkled before would then fairly blaze.

One was a great company dining, where the parlors were thronged with guests, and the air filled with gay laughter, the buzz of conversation, the notes of the piano, and the usual stereotyped outcries at the conclusion of some tremulously rendered song—"How beautiful!" "Perfectly love-

ly!" "Oh, don't stop." "Do give us just one more!" etc.

Another side of the great household occasion was the presence of several extra cooks in the kitchen. Bettie, the chief, was in her glory and looked like a general as she issued her many orders in a loud voice in the midst of slamming stove doors, and falling billets of wood, threatening to brain a half dozen youngsters who impeded her way, while the steam and vapor from pans and ovens, encircling her head, stood for the smoke of the battle.

In the "Big House" there was an unusual number of negro women with white aprons and parti-colored bandanas on their heads. Some were the regular trained servants of the home, and others had been brought up from the plantation to meet the present need. This difference made occasion for frequent open rebuke, as well as secret pride with the "regulars," as they would stumble on the "raw recruits," and find them motionless, gazing in open eyed and open mouthed astonishment and admiration at the muslins and silks, the low necks and short sleeves, the outstanding crinoline, and all the other bewildering finery of the occasion.

Until the Ballantyne children grew up they had

to be scoured and dressed for the hour. And such faithful attention did they get in the bathroom that their ears were red as beets for most of the evening, while the white duck trousers and broad pantelettes, so stood out with unyielding starch, that the garments actually seemed to support their wearers. Mr. Ballantyne was also made ready for the festival, and would appear in a black suit, richly figured vest, and a large cravat encircling an equally large collar. Mr. Ballantyne generally seemed in doubt as to what he was attending, and therefore soon sinking into one of his reveries, his personal appearance suggested a funeral; and later when the huge knot of his cravat slipped around under his left ear, as it always did, the vision in its hint to the observer was still more startling.

Mrs. Ballantyne knew nothing whatever about housekeeping, but was blessed with first-class servants who had mastered or mistressed every mystery of the kitchen and dining room. They knew all things, from the preparation of the most difficult and choicest Southern dishes, to the folding of immaculate napkins into the daintiest as well as most remarkable shapes. So all the consort of Mr. Ballantyne had to do was to entertain in the parlor, and sit radiant as a queen at the head of

the table, blissfully certain that everything would come out all right, and another company dinner victory be scored.

And so things would and did come out all right, barring those accidents that are said to take place in the best regulated families.

But surely it was a sight worth seeing to behold the folding doors suddenly thrown open, and Mrs. Ballantyne with ringlets, loop earrings and smiles all in motion, heading the procession, leaning on the arm of Col. Bowser, a man with round, florid face, gray mutton chop side whiskers, courtly in manners, and owning one of the finest cotton plantations in the State. Then when the laughing, buzzing throng had taken their places at the table, with a dim perspective of ebony faces at a distant window; how full of ease and grace was Mrs. Ballantyne as she dished out oyster soup with a large silver ladle left her by her grandmother. Several gentlemen would be firing remarks at her from both sides of the table at once, but she had smiles and apt replies for them all, while her gold earrings shook and the silver ladle flashed in and out of the milk in search for the regulation number of oysters for each plate.

It seemed that one memorable evening, some officious new kitchen hand had abstracted a number of the tempting bivalves, so that Mrs. Ballan-

tyne was fishing in vain for them after the first half dozen guests had been helped. A colored damsel of twelve, caught up hastily to fill the vacancy among the waitresses, became exceedingly interested in the voyages of discovery, and planted her black face and woolly head just over Mrs. Ballantyne's shoulder, unknown to that good lady, though observed by some of the highly amused company. Just then a single oyster floated to the surface, when the diminutive African, with expanding eyes, cried out in a voice that first electrified and afterwards convulsed the whole party, "Dars one, Miss!"

Amid all the laughter of the company, and the sudden retirement in disgrace of the oyster finder, how polite were the guests, who warmly insisted that they preferred the soup without the oysters, and how charming was Mrs. Ballantyne as she emerged from behind her lace handkerchief in that state so well known in the society world as blended confusion and self-possession.

Then on that identical night, after the meats and vegetables had been removed, and the dessert was in order, who should come wandering in but the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Ballantyne, a lad of thirteen, and who had received the famous name of Oliver Goldsmith. He had been told to wait for the second table, but an hour is a weary

while for a hungry boy, especially when a "company dinner" is on hand. So, against the domestic rule and regulation, and in face of the maternal injunction, he walked in as the waiters were deftly whisking their brushes over the damask table cloth, and, standing in front of the large side-board, which was loaded down with an array of fruits, wine bottles, frosted cakes, colored gelatines, and an immense cut glass dish containing Island Float, he clasped his hands and suddenly and loudly apostrophised,

"Oh, Float! I could eat a thousand of you!"

Of course there was considerable merriment over this, and Oliver was promptly banished for the time being, but not until Mr. Snipes, a very grave looking young man, with a long, thin countenance, and wearing a single eye glass, had been filled with such uncontrollable mirth that he sucked a crumb of bread down his windpipe, was escorted out on the back gallery by two gentlemen friends, and a sympathetic old lady, and had an abundance of water given to him, and an equally liberal supply of knocks applied vigorously to his back, until he found or confessed that he found relief.

When Mr. Snipes returned, feeling recovered in a measure, his first glance around was for Oliver; and every time his eyes rested upon the lad, it was

sufficient to set him off in something that resembled a cross between a spasm and a case of apoplexy. He seemed to regard the child as a great natural curiosity.

But Mrs. Ballantyne must not be forgotten. Another occasion in which she shone to the highest advantage and illumined the whole family horizon and regions beyond, was when her numerous friends and relatives came to visit them for a few days or weeks; and there would originate and develop in that time, a real love affair. Then it was that the mistress of the Ballantyne mansion was in her full glory. If there was anything that she could manage, it was matters of the heart pertaining to others, from the beginning of the love sickness to its final end in separation, or consummation in marriage. If there was anything on earth she liked to do next to dressing her hair and eating breakfast in bed, it was to make matches. It is true that some of these couples fell away from her afterward and seemed to entertain a kind of grudge against her, but that in no wise impaired the gifts of Mrs. Ballantyne, or discontinued their practice upon others.

If misunderstandings, quarrels, and partings took place between the lovers instead of the more prosaic marriage, Mrs. Ballantyne then fairly excelled herself. These agitating occurrences

brought out still other accomplishments and excellences of the good lady, and her touch would rest on a dozen different reins as she guided the chariot of the case in hand to the place she desired. There would be a strange and yet pleasing mystery all about the house. Mrs. Ballantyne would be seen whispering to a score of different people all in one morning. Buzzings were heard in side nooks and corners, as well as in the hall and on the veranda. Notes passed frequently of the most secret nature, though there was reason to believe that everybody read them before nightfall. Tears were shed. Messengers came and went. Somebody, perhaps the rejected suitor or discarded lover, went tearing down the road on horseback. The young lady went to bed. An odor of smelling salts penetrated the parlor. A dry sob was heard. Mystery and misery brooded. Eyes were swollen. Rings and packages were returned. Ladies would come out of dark rooms, entwine each other's waists with their arms and whisper, "How sad." A gentleman was observed in a trellised arbor to pull his hair, or start to do it. Negroes were kept on the jump, and horses had no rest. Guests dallied at the meals, but ate on the whole as much as ever. One young lady, however, burst into tears at the table, and had to be led away by two of her companions. Still another with a dreamy expression

was heard saying to a young man that "she had never loved a dear gazelle."

In the midst of all these doings and undoings, this indescribable combination of love, mystery, heartaches, and all kinds of happenings, Mrs. Ballantyne was in her glory. If things grew commonplace, interest languished and exhaustion set in, it would only require the presence of this remarkable lady for a few minutes here and there, and lo! the flames were fanned, heat was on again, sighs, tears and whispers would be multiplied, more mysterious notes be written, and utterances in dark corners and at the end of the porch abound.

It was also, at such a time as this, that Mrs. Ballantyne was enabled to write her most affecting poems about billow and pillow, spoken and broken, sever and never, fair and despair, knell and farewell.

There are many other things that could be told about the polished, hospitable, and versatile wife of the absent-minded Mr. Ballantyne; but the limits of this story will not allow the indulgence. Nevertheless they are all written in the chronicles of the Ballantyne family.

III

THE YOUNG BALLANTYNES

Before the Civil War, Southerners might name their children as they would, but few such appellations escaped a beheading, reheading and often entire change at the hands of the family servants. One of the prerogatives assumed and tacitly granted the slave in the South was this accolade touch and bedubbing process by which a nickname was given a child instead of his own. Few could get rid of them, the rule being that, barnacle-like, they clung to their owners through the whole voyage of life.

As for the parents and relatives of the victims, it was utterly vain to struggle against the transforming process going on right before their eyes and ears; useless to laugh and say it is perfectly preposterous to give such a name; and lost time to get mad, box the servants' jaws and vociferate, "My child shall not be called by any such absurd and outlandish title!" The re-designating act would take place in spite of all that might, could, should and would be done, and so thoroughly that often friends and acquaintances of the family never knew the real name of the child. An additional fact of surprise was that the parents themselves at last fell into the use of

the terms given by the negro sponsors, and the beautiful, elegant cognomens of Edwin, Gerald, Blanche and Grace, would utterly disappear, and the strange, grotesque verbal applications of "Ripper," "Snorter," "Coon," "Possum," "Boots," "Horse," "Dan Tucker," and many others like them would take their place and remain victors in the field. It was as though another Civilization had been wiped out, and a set of Goths and Vandals with shaggy hides and wooden bludgeons were stalking around amid the ruins, in lieu of the inhabitants whom they had slaughtered.

The names given by Mrs. Ballantyne to her children were, as has been mentioned, Walter Scott, Oliver Goldsmith, Amanda Malvina, and Seraphina Clementina. But a strange retribution was upon her, for as she had treated her husband, so now her servants rendered unto her full measure, shaken together, pressed down and running over. The classic and sentimental titles she had selected with such care were utterly ignored and set aside by the negroes, both at the house and on the plantation, and in their stead appeared the commonplace and ordinary names of "Boo and Bud," "Sis and Miss."

Boo was a contraction of Boots. The circumstance fastening this highly elegant expression

upon the boy being his possession of a pair of little red-topped boots, in which he took such pride and stalked around with so lordly an air that the servants all united in calling their inflated owner first Bootsey, afterwards shortening it to Boots, and finally to Boo. Thus perished Walter Scott, the Second.

Oliver Goldsmith went down before the prosaic term of Bud. Of course, when the second son was born, he became little brother, next brudder, then buddy, and finally Bud. So Oliver was Budded, if not butted out of the household.

Amanda Malvina was captured by Mrs. Ballantyne from the Children of the Abbey, with the intent of making her a fixture in their own household, but through the aforesaid African lips, she was transmigrated or metamorphosed into plain "Sis."

Seraphina Clementina was a name entirely too long and difficult for the descendants of Ham, and so the little one had hardly appeared before the footlights, and made her bow as Seraphina, when the hands of the servants were laid upon her, changed her verbal drapery, and she was greeted on her reappearance as "Little Mistiss." Later on this costume was cut shorter to "Missie," and still later Seraphina settled down to the business of life in the narrowed garb of "Miss."

What a havoc was here! What an evolution, not to say devolution! Let the reader think of brigands and robbers going into a man's home and taking away parts and portions of one's children until all were gone and some mud images were left instead. Or if this is too strong, think of a Dog Catcher armed with authority coming into the house day after day and taking off sections of the ears and tails of pet Newfoundlands and Spaniels until nothing but stubs of the animals themselves remained.

But no matter how it tried the feelings, the facts existed; the new brands burned in, and the absurd names abided. The Ballantyne children grew up to manhood and womanhood, but they never outgrew the titular honors conferred on them by their own slaves. They were Boo'd and Budded, and Sissed and Missed all the days of their lives.

Boo fell heir to the long, slender legs of his father and his nasal way of saying "Ah-h," and "H-u-m-p-h." He had, also, a great way of getting into all kinds of trouble. If there was a pool of water within a mile of the place, he would fall into it. If there was a nest of yellow-jackets anywhere in that part of the country, Boo found them. They also found Boo.

Bud was a nondescript. There was little intel-

lectuality about him, and yet he had been named Oliver Goldsmith.

Sis secured her mother's faded blue eyes, corkscrew ringlets, affected shake of the head and society simper.

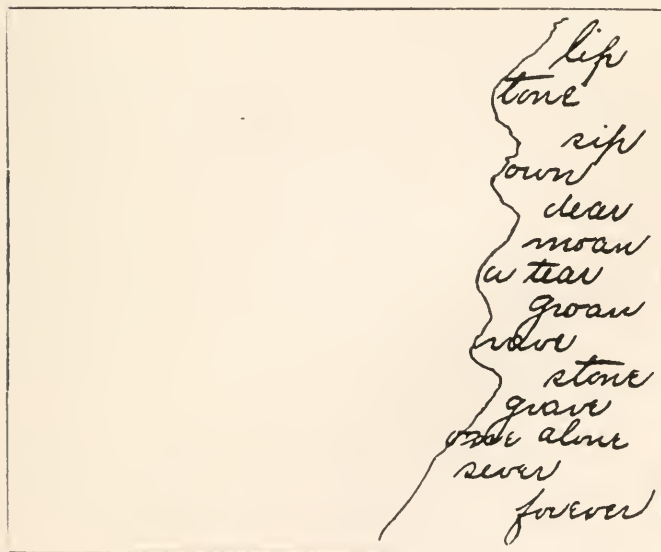
Miss inherited the maternal gift of poesy, so that even at fifteen, she was known to sit on the slope of the hill in the dew, gaze at the crimson West, and then, with a moody look, go off to herself in the library and write something about "sunset bars" and "far off stars"; about "sigh" and "nigh"; about "weep" and "sleep"; "bliss" and "kiss"; also "dove" and "love."

Miss wrote a sonnet when she was sixteen that was reported to be exceedingly affecting; but there was but one copy, and this single piece of manuscript was caught in a heavy shower of rain, while in the side pocket of a gentleman's coat who had surreptitiously taken it with the intention of reading it alone at home.

On bringing it to the light, it was discovered that the rain, in connection with the heat of the gentleman's body, had soaked up and destroyed the entire poem with the exception of the last word in each line. These are reproduced with great gladness that the Public might know for itself how much was lost to the world in the absorption by the elements of this poetical gem. The surviving words plainly indicate its beauty, force and

originality. The water line is also exhibited so as to show how deep the moisture penetrated. To the Fancy, this wavering boundary appears as the margin of an engulfing sea, while the rescued words in a row, stand like survivors on the beach after a great storm, castaway—but saved!

Here it is minus ink blurs and water discolorations, as it was restored to the family after the warm summer afternoon shower. The title will have to be guessed at, as that was entirely washed out. Some one affirmed that it was “To One I Love,” but Miss, with many blushes, declared she had never, could never, and no, never would tell that part of the poem to any one. This is the fragment,



Miss was entreated to rewrite the poem for the benefit of her friends, if not for posterity, but she replied with a pensive, far-away smile that she "could never recall what were plainly bursts of inspiration, coming from some peculiar complexity of situation or condition of heart." "No," she continued with a sigh as she raised her ivory fan to hide the tears in her eyes, "I could never recall that sonnet. Like the horns in elf-land faintly blowing, it comes, is heard, dies away and is gone forever."

All the Ballantyne children inherited the mother's fondness for music, so that the piano knew no rest from morning until night, and often from night until almost morning again.

When Boo had played the accompaniment to the solitary song he knew, "Thou hast learned to Love Another," and sung the piece twice through with his gosling voice; then Bud came in and thumped, "Old Jim Crow," and "Chicken in the Bread Tray." After this, Sis sailed in and made the strings fairly hum and quiver with "The Maiden's Prayer." When she retired, Miss glided to the music stool and wailed about "The Lonely Bird."

In the afternoon, Boo tried his hand again; Bud presented his everlasting "Chicken in the Bread Tray"; then came Sis with "The Maiden's Prayer"; and finally Miss with the Bird.

In the middle of the day, Mrs. Ballantyne played and sang, "The Origin of the Harp," in a thin, quavering voice, and as she proceeded with the melancholy narrative, would cross her hands over the keys, an accomplishment highly thought of in the "Fifties," or just before the War.

The fact that the South was getting ready to cross hands in a very different way with people on the other side of the Mason and Dixon line invested this musical grace and performance with something of a prophetic air. Anyhow, let that be as it will, the point made here is that the Ballantyne piano was grievously vexed by living spirits. It had but little rest at night, and absolutely none in the day. As its vitals were torn from early morn until deep in the night, it could truly have said, "I am tormented."

IV

MR. BALLANTYNE'S INCREASING AB- STRACTION

"It is very evident to my mind," said Mrs. Ballantyne, "that if Mr. Ballantyne doesn't blow himself and all the rest of us up, one of these fine mornings, with those jars, pots and machinery of

his in the shop, then he's going to get so deep set in one of his brown studies that he will never come out of it."

The occasion of this vigorous remark was that on that very morning, a man had been hallooing at the gate in front of the house for fully five minutes, while Mr. Ballantyne sat on the gallery in full view of the person, and never seemed to be aware of his presence or heard a single sound of his stentorian calls. There he was, sitting cross-legged, with walking cane balanced on his finger, gazing over the upper rim of his spectacles down the road, in the most placid, vacant faced way, as if no excited, crimson-faced individual was just in front waving his hand and vociferating, "Hello the house!"

He did well in saying, "Hello the house," for the man of the house never heard a word. All this, of course, was quite trying to the party who was endeavoring to secure attention, for the very appearance of Mr. Ballantyne seemed to indicate a perfect indifference to the call, caller and the whole affair. The man thought he was ignored when he simply was not perceived, and was being gazed through into space and regions far beyond.

It was only a few mornings after this occurrence, that Mr. Ballantyne took his accustomed

place on the iron settee, crossed his legs, balanced his stick evenly on his right forefinger, lowered his chin and commenced gazing over his spectacles down the road at nothing. The tremulous motion of the right foot gave the left limb a gentle ride. His hat was set back on his head, and the whole attitude was that of profound meditation.

At this moment, Boo, who was always getting into trouble, could find nothing better to do than to fall in a well, forty feet deep, in the back yard. Immediately there was a great shriek, and clamor among the servants. Some rushed for ladders, and ropes, some ran to the neighbors for they knew not what, others did nothing but scream, while a negro boy of fifteen, bareheaded, barefooted and with scant apparel on his person, flew to tell Mr. Ballantyne, who, quietly sitting on the gallery, had not heard a note of the uproar.

Unfortunately for Boo, his mother, sisters and Bud, had all gone to the main county town that day in the carriage, so that Mr. Ballantyne was the only one of the family to receive the report of the misfortune, and he was in a brown study. But the boy, rushing up the steps in front of the absorbed man, cried out loud enough to be heard a block away:

“Ole Marster! Mars Boo, sah, done tumbul in de well!”

“H-u-m-p-h?” said Mr. Ballantyne, in an inquiring bumble-bee kind of voice.

“Mars Boo done fell in de well, Ole Marster.”

“Who’s that calling,” asked Mr. Ballantyne, in a far-away tone, with his eyes fixed on vacancy and the pucker on the forehead showing that he was grappling with some kind of problem, and had utterly failed to take in what was being yelled at his elbow. So, with the bumble-bee note, he replied,

“Who’s—that—calling—me?”

“Hits me er callin’ you, Mars Tom. Hits yaller Bob’s little boy, Jim. Doan you know Jim? Hits me—Jim—Mars Tom—er tellin’ you Mars Boo’s in de well.”

“What—did—you—say?” asked Mr. Ballantyne, still wondering, but evidently making a great effort to come back to earth.

“Laws—a—mussey! Mars Boo, sah. He done fall haid fomus in de well, sah. He done drowndid by dis time,” cried the boy, now fairly blubbering and wiping his wet cheeks and overflowing eyes with his ragged sleeve.

“Who’s in the well?” queried Mr. Ballantyne, now evidently coming back to life, and its surroundings. “Who did you say was in the well?”

“Mars Boo, sah,” sobbed the now loudly weeping boy, while he stamped around almost beside

himself. "Mars Boo done drap in de well, sah, and he done daid, sah, by dis time, sah."

"What!" cried the now thoroughly aroused father, as he rose up and took long strides toward the well, with his alpaca sack coat fluttering in the wind behind, "Why didn't you tell me before?"

"I is done tole yer er hundid times, sah, en yer nuvver hy'erd me."

By this time the whole yard was in the greatest excitement, noise and confusion. Screams and wails abounded, while the servants were gathered around the well with brooms, hoes, rolling pins, and every other needless thing which they could lay their hands upon.

While much vociferation and exclamation filled the air, together with loud questions and answers as to how the boy got in, Mr. Ballantyne arrived on the scene, with Jim at his heels, leaned over the curbing, and gazing down the dark depths, cried,

"Bootsey, are you there?"

Perhaps no one but Mr. Ballantyne would ever have put the anxiety and trouble of the occasion in such a verbal shape. Examined critically, it was a needless question, for there was no other place for Boo to be but at the bottom of the well, inasmuch as he had just fallen in, and no one as

yet had pulled him out, and furthermore, there was no mode of egress in the other direction toward China.

To the great joy of all, a voice ascended from the bottom of the well, forty feet below, declaring:

“Yes, Father, I’m here.”

In due time, Boo was hauled up, sitting astride of the bucket, with no harm done him, marvellous to say, beyond the infliction of some blue and black bruises on his body. It seems that he had been peering into the dark well like his father did into chemical and mechanical mysteries, when he lost his balance and fell in; but as he was falling, he caught the rope, and as this sped out on the revolving windlass, his fall was broken somewhat, and thereby his life was saved.

In twenty minutes from the time of the reappearance of Boo on the face of the earth, Mr. Ballantyne was on the front porch, legs crossed, stick balanced, and eyes gazing over his spectacles down the road at nothing and nobody.

V

THE END OF THE BALLANTYNES

It all befell as Mrs. Ballantyne had predicted many times it would, Mr. Ballantyne did really blow himself up. Nevertheless, in spite of her

prophecy and constantly expressed certainty of its coming fulfillment, the good lady was very much shocked when the disaster finally took place.

Mr. Ballantine had become more and more absorbed in his meditations; his brown studies grew browner; his observations profounder; so that one day he walked into a bee hive, and at another time, plunged into an empty cistern that was undergoing repairs, and did a number of other absent-minded things which made even his best friends say he needed not only a guardian, but a nurse and keeper.

He capped the climax one day by sticking a lighted candle in the mouth of a large tin can containing an explosive oil. Perhaps the shape of the vessel's neck suggested the idea of a candlestick to Mr. Ballantyne, so that when the thought engrossed being inserted the candle in the bell-shaped mouth, the burning light fell through, there was an awful explosion, one side of the room was torn out, and the unfortunate man instantly killed.

Mrs. Ballantyne went into deep mourning, wrote on paper and envelopes that had a black border nearly an inch deep, and spent hours in lauding Mr. Ballantyne to the skies, where it is to be hoped he had already gone. It certainly would have astonished him, however, could he have returned

and heard "what a considerate husband he had been"; how "he was the best of men"; how "he lived for his family"; and how "his main thought had been to please her."

Then would come fresh gushes of tears, more sighing and shaking of the head, and the solemn assertion that "few women ever had such a husband as she had possessed"; which last statement was very true indeed, and would have been contradicted by no one who knew Mr. Ballantyne. After this would follow the usual closing clause of the oft-repeated speech of sorrow, that

"She never expected to see another man like Mr. Ballantyne—never!—never!—never! That no one need say anything to her to the contrary."

But no one said anything to the contrary. The conviction with everybody, reaching even to a cordial agreement, was that there was no one like Mr. Ballantyne.

After fifteen years of canonizing her husband, and like a certain church, making him a saint in the other world, whether he was ever one on earth or not, Mrs. Ballantyne herself fell on sleep, and was laid by his side in a country burial ground near the old church, where they had first seen each other, attended protracted meeting together, and at last were joined for life by the white-haired pastor in the holy bonds of matrimony.

Miss continued to write poetry whose line terminals were mainly "gleaming" and "beaming," "pining" and "twining," "sighing" and dying."

One afternoon she had been called on to recite one of her most sentimental pieces in which the concluding words were "soon" and "moon," "hair" and "despair," "years" and "tears," "gloom and "tomb." The company was much affected, and evidently so was the reciter herself, for she hurriedly retired to conceal her emotion, doubtless in some alcove of the house or shadowy nook in the garden. But only a minute afterwards a neighboring wealthy young planter, who had been much impressed with the poetess, the poem, and its touching rendition, becoming thirsty, was escorted by Bud, who always did the wrong thing, into the dining room to get a drink of water. When lo! and behold! there at the uncleared dining table sat Miss with a large dish of turnip greens and bacon before her, of which she was most heartily partaking, with the assistance of a fork in one hand and a piece of corn bread in the other.

Be it far from the author to reflect in any wise upon that good, old-fashioned dish of which our fathers and forefathers partook before the more aristocratic spinach came into vogue. Furthermore, he would not have it presumed a moment, that he would insinuate that there is, or should

be, any necessary antagonism between the gushings of the sentimental nature, and the reception into the same person of turnip greens flanked with bacon and corn bread. Stony facts, alone, in this chapter are being dealt with; and one of these granite happenings was, that there was then and there in the dining room a most unmistakable tableau.

The unfolding beau actually had the discourtesy to grin, and Miss without the presence of mind to offer him a part of the dish or make out that she was just tasting the strange vegetable to see if she liked it, or to find out what it was; Miss, it is repeated, was first speechless. and then straightway vanished.

Perhaps a poem to be called "A Fragment," might assist the mind right here in taking in what happened then and soon afterwards. But as the whole matter is delicate and painful, only the last words of the "Fragment" shall be given. They are "blush" and "rush," "alone" and "groan," "Bud" and "thud," "slap" and "rap," "crossed," "tost" and "lost."

The beau, from a foolish inability to recognize the harmony between sentiment and vegetables, never came back. But other suitors came, Miss rallied, and finally, at the age of twenty-five, and several years after the close of the Civil War

married a man in the Soap Business. This gentleman did not deal in Fancy Toilet articles, but in soft soap altogether. He had discovered a cheap method of compressing the liquid substance into enduring bars and thereby made a fortune.

Miss ceased to write poetry after her marriage, and always manifested a great antipathy to turnip greens. She confided to her society friends the fact, as she brushed a speck from her silk dress, that their odor always sickened her; that she was so delicately constituted that she could not even endure the smell of boiled cauliflower.

Her social circle cordially agreed with her, and one in her enthusiasm came very near saying that the scent of cabbage and greens was as disgusting to her as the odor of a Soap Factory, when she caught herself just in time, and ended suddenly with the words,

“Of course—by all manner of means.”

It might be well to say that Miss is still living.

Sis had two soldiers to propose to her in 1863, one of whom had lost an arm, and the other a leg, in battle. For quite a while, she could not tell which of the two she preferred.

She was a bright, mischievous girl and would reason and argue with all apparent seriousness to her friends about the merits and demerits of the cases, as represented in the two applicants for her

hand, and would pretend to weigh the comparative advantages of possessing an armless or legless husband. One day she saw the two leaning against each other as if it required both to keep a standing position. From her angle of view, she saw three legs in a row beneath, and three arms above, while the two bodies seemed to be merged into one. In expressing herself to intimate friends about it afterwards, she said:

“They looked spidery; and made me think of a centipede. I couldn’t think of marrying either one after that sight.”

To them she had the sauciness if not the heartlessness to say, it took both of them to make one man, and she wanted for herself a whole individual when she married.

Perhaps the speech brought a retributive judgment down upon her. In 1864, she met a dashing young officer to whom she engaged herself. He went to the “front” and in the next battle lost one of his eyes. He wrote her word about the painful affliction, and she replied cheerily that it was all right; that she had two and they could get along. In the second battle, his arm was shot off by a shell. As soon as he could, he acquainted Sis with the loss. But very cordial and comforting was her response, that she accepted what was left.

In the fourth battle, his right leg was so badly

shattered by a minnie ball, that it had to be amputated. In his bulletin to Sis, the young officer stated that he seemed to be leaving the world by sections, and that there was so much less of him than when he first proposed to her, fully a third of himself being in the grave, that he considered it his duty to give her the opportunity of cancelling the engagement and marrying a man who had more than two-thirds of his body above ground.

Her reply by the next mail was original, cheering and very reassuring. She, after expressing great sympathy for his sufferings, added,

“As long as there is enough of you to be propped up before the preacher and make responses, I will marry that part.”

He lost nothing more of his physical structure, and came home with great military honor at the close of the War, having been promoted to a Majorship for gallantry on the battlefield. His first work was to remedy defects made by balls and bullets as far as possible, and then secondly to marry. So, with a glass eye so natural that one could hardly tell it from the true one; and with an artificial arm and leg that worked easily and lightly without creaking; and with a nice tailor-made suit covering all and fitting well, he looked the gallant man that he was, bore off his blushing bride to a home he had prepared, and

did more for her in material comforts than many husbands can afford who have two eyes and the whole complement of physical members.

Boo, who had inherited his father's proclivity to fall into various things, and started it as a boy by tumbling into a forty-foot well, kept up the practice after he drew his share of the property and moved away to a distant State. Every report which came back represented him as having had some new fall, one into bad company, another into gross misconduct, a third into debt, a fourth into poverty, a fifth from the back of a runaway horse, and a sixth into the grave.

Bud, after squandering his part of the patrimony, roamed around first among his relatives and friends, and then among strangers in a shiftless, thriftless kind of way, and finally astonished everybody by marrying a rich widow, ten years older than himself. As it proved, he never did a wiser and better thing, for the woman really loved him and saw that he wanted for nothing. His old favorite piece of music, "Chicken in the Bread Tray," had come true at last, Bud being the chicken, and the widow furnishing the Bread Tray. Nor did she stop at that, but her influence was so powerful and excellent that she made Bud give up all of his evil ways, join the church, and trans-

formed him into what the world calls a good man.

So it came to pass, as is often the case in the South, that the entire family disappeared. The plantation had long before been sold, and the homestead years afterward followed suit and passed into the hands of strangers.

For quite a while, the Mansion, with its waving, sighing trees about it, remained the same, so that at night when the windows shone brightly, and some one touched the keys of a piano inside, one could almost believe that Sis had glided in and was about to give us "The Maiden's Prayer," or Miss would treat us to a tremulous rendition of "The Lonely Bird."

But, no! the touch on the keys was different, and the pieces were dissimilar. And it could not be so anyhow, for the people who once lived under the roof-tree were now widely scattered on earth, and some were in the other world.

The old trees on the lawn and in the yard continued to reach out their branches and sigh, as if they missed their former owners. They seemed to be wondering what had become of the grave, thoughtful faced man who used to sit on the gallery and gaze fixedly for hours through their vistas into space. And where were the laughing, romping boys who were wont to frolic under their

shade, and swing in their branches? They never came back, and so the trees grieved and mourned about it.

Finally the day arrived and another stranger came and bought the old Ballantyne Mansion. Being of a very practical utilitarian turn of mind, this new comer and owner cut down all of the shrubbery with its wilderness of roses, next plowed up the lawn, and planted it in turnips and potatoes. Still later, he sawed the house in two sections and moved both portions several hundred yards away down the hill by the branch, and rented them out to colored people.

His last act was to bring in some wood choppers and level the beautiful grove with the dust. So scores of forest monarchs of oak, beech and pine, that had flung their protecting shadows over three generations of the Ballantyne family; that had seen a nation rise to its feet in 1861, and go down in smoke, blood and ruin in 1865; that had beheld still further back and witnessed the plumed Indian warrior court his dusky bride under their shadows, and disappear with the gleam of the rifle and axe of the white man; these same grand old trees, full of the secrets of the past, were cut down and turned into cord wood.

It would be difficult for one to realize now as he glances over the denuded hillside, all covered

with truck gardens and a field of billowy corn, that up there once, was one of the many beautiful and typical homes of the South. Nevertheless, it stood there, lovely for situation, famous for its hospitality, and equally celebrated in the fact, that the cordial spirit of the household was only surpassed by the refreshing originality of the family.

A STRANGE HOMESTEAD

A Strange Homestead

My cousin, Mrs. Amy Balfour, had been looking for a certain kind of dwelling for several days. She had gone up avenues and had come down streets and cut across squares, but after a week's search was no nearer success than at the beginning. The houses that were desirable were already occupied, and the few which were uninhabited were too small, or too large, or too far out, or too near in, or too something that precluded all idea of renting.

But my cousin was a woman not easily discouraged. She distinguished between weariness of the body and sinking of the spirit. The first she could not prevent, but the second she would not tolerate. She came, as she had been known to say more than once, of good stock, not a coward among the men, and all the women true daughters of noble sires. Her father was known as Col. Something Lindsay, I forget his given name. He had distinguished himself in a war, but which one I do not now remember, whether Mexican or Indian; and I also fail to recall how he dis-

tinguished himself. He either surrounded three Mexicans or Indians, or they surrounded him; and he either cut his way through them or they cut their way through him, I do not remember which, and it really does not matter, for they are all dead now, the Colonel, the Mexicans and the Indians.

The only point I would make is that when Col. Lindsay died he left his plucky spirit to his one daughter, together with an old gully-washed, sedge-covered plantation, and the saber he had used in that war, the name of which I am so sorry I have forgotten.

In due time my cousin married, and after a few years was left a widow with the privilege of taking care of herself; her husband having preferred to run through with what he owned, before he should go hence and be no more. The widow's income from the gully washed place was four bales of cotton a year. This amount evidently needed supplementing, so my cousin for several years had taken boarders, and making a success of it in a small house, was now seeking to lengthen her cords and push out her stakes in the shape of a larger domicile.

It was near the hour of sunset when she suddenly came upon the very house she desired. It was a three-story brick residence sitting back

from the street and occupying almost the center of the lot. In front was a yard without grass or walks, in which several forest trees swayed and sighed. On one of them was tacked up a placard, "For Sale or Rent." To the right was a kitchen garden utterly gone to weeds, and on the left was an orchard in just as melancholy a condition.

There was a large forlorn looking back yard with several out houses that were empty and falling to ruin. One of them had a sunken foundation in front, and appeared to be going down on its knees like a camel. A couple of dilapidated wash tubs, an overturned chicken coop and a well with no rope or bucket, completed the external furniture. The only sound on the place was a mournful creaking of some unseen door, and the occasional bang of a distant shutter when the wind would arise with a momentary gust. It was simply impossible to hear these echoes in the lonely enclosure without a nervous start, a creepy sensation down the back, and an apprehensive backward glance to see if anybody was looking at or stealing upon one from the shadowy barn or the open door of the smoke house.

The main building, however, was the chief object of interest. It had a steep roof with two dormer windows, which led backward into the

attic. A couple of faded red curtains hung loosely over the sash. Either they had not been worth removing or had been overlooked on the departure of the last tenant. All the other windows on the lower floors were closed with solid wooden shutters. There was a back gallery, while in front a portico projected over the hall door at the right hand corner. Through the narrow side windows on each side of the door could be had a dim view of a long shadowy passage terminating with a broad staircase which disappeared upward in still dimmer regions. One of the wooden gutters over the porch had become choked with dead leaves near the spout, and made a kind of dam for the last rain. The moisture leaked through the honey-combed wood and fell in drops upon the floor with a melancholy monotone.

The place had an appearance of gloom and mystery about it. One could not but wonder, and many did marvel, why a dwelling with such ample grounds should remain untenanted from month to month and year to year. The houses all about it were occupied, the town in which it was located was large and prosperous and residences seemed to be in demand; "Why was this domicile vacant?"

This was the very question my cousin Amy

asked of a couple, a man and a woman, who were passing by as she leaned against the gate looking at the deserted building. The answer they gave was: "They say it is haunted, Madam."

It is said there is a vein of superstition in everybody, but as my acquaintance is confined to a few thousand of the human race, and there are a billion and a half of the aforesaid family that I have not had the opportunity of interviewing on the subject, of course about this I cannot speak assuredly.

It is a fact, however, that Cousin Amy's heart gave a little jump when she received the blunt answer I have written. She had felt a small bound of the same organ when she first beheld the house, and still another when she read the placard, "For Sale or Rent," on one of the large shade trees; but this jump was different from the other two. The first was one of hope, the second of joy, and the third and last was—well, it was not like the others. But Cousin Amy would never have admitted that it was a superstitious thrill or motion of fear.

The sun was setting, some locusts were drowsily singing in the trees before the deserted home, the shadows were filling the yards, while the air of loneliness and mournfulness about the dwelling which had struck her at the first view, nat-

urally deepened under the words of her informant. But shaking off the impression, my Cousin turned to the man and said, laughingly:

“It is not possible that you believe in such a thing as haunted houses?”

The person questioned was evidently a day laborer. His speech was slow and deliberate and he had an impassive, not to say sad face. The ghost could not have had a better introducer or defender, so far as manner was concerned, than this individual. His wife, a blue-eyed, thin-looking, washed-out piece of humanity stood nervously twitching her fingers around the top of one of the palings, while her husband carried on the conversation.

My cousin was a tall, slender woman, and always dressed in deepest black with a long crepe veil pinned to her bonnet and falling backwards. As she had been compelled to take care of herself since her husband's death, she had developed into what is called a common sense business woman. She kept up with the market prices and the Real Estate Reports, read no sentimental novels, and had no books of uncanny lore in her small library. As a girl she had never believed in fairies, and as a grown woman had no faith in ghosts. She had never heard of “The Golden Bug,” “The Black Cat,” nor “The Murder of

The Rue St. Morgue." She usually straightened up her household accounts at night, read briefly in her Prayer Book, slept soundly and awoke with a good appetite.

The fact was, that upon a little reflection she was not sorry to hear the house was haunted, as she saw that the rental price of the building would naturally be considerably lower than that of one which was level-headed, so to speak, and behaved itself properly, not only in the day, but at night as well, a time in which so many people and things take advantage to cut up generally.

So my cousin put a number of questions to the man, and drew from him the facts that several families had moved into the tenement but never stayed more than a few days. That it had lain idle for years until two months before, a gardener and his family had braved the reports and came with garden seed, implements, vegetables and all, rejoicing that with such ample grounds they could make an easy living through the markets. This gardener had only stayed two days and nights when he and his wife looked like ghosts themselves, and packed up early one morning and drove away.

"What do they all say happens inside?" asked my Cousin.

“Too many things to tell you. One is that people walk up and down the stairs all night. Then the bells get to ringing. Then they hear someone fall in the room on the second floor. Beside this they hear a gurgling like a man choking to death, and I can’t tell you what all.”

My cousin was on the point of laughing outright, but noticing the narrator’s grave manner and how evidently affected he was by the rumors flying about in regard to the dwelling, she drew her veil quickly before her mouth to conceal her smiles.

“Is that all you can tell me?” she asked, after steadying her voice.

“Ain’t that enough, Madam?” returned the man, looking with a wondering air upon her. Then continuing, he said:

“There is more if I had time to tell you all I have heard, but this much I have seen myself. Do you see those two windows in the roof with the red curtains hanging over them?”

My cousin lifted her eyes upward and said:

“Yes, I do.”

“Well,” resumed the other, “what if I should tell you that twice I have seen the corner of that right hand curtain lifted and a face like that of a dead man looking down at me?”

My cousin, as I have said, had no nonsense

about her, but the speaker's words were so solemn, and the excitement which had grown upon him was so marked that, sensible woman though she was, yet as she listened with her eyes fixed upon the windows, she again felt peculiarly, and realized an unmistakable shivering sensation that took the vertebral column for a highway of travel, but also branched off in various directions through and around the body.

The man's wife here broke in, saying:

"Nothing could ever get me to look up at that window, for if I did and saw that face staring at me I would drop dead in my tracks. I just know I would."

Then pulling her husband by the arm, she continued:

"It is getting late, let's go home."

When the couple left, my cousin walked inside the yard, and, approaching the placard on the tree, took down the address of the Agent. She next ascended the steps to the portico, glancing through the window pane at the shadowy hall and stairway; took a circuit about the house, walked through the back yard, looked into the kneeling tenement with its open but dark doorway, and returning to the starting point stood under the trees gazing at the place while revolving certain plans in her mind. The building

fronted west and had the light of the dying day on its upper part. Suddenly remembering what the man said about the right hand dormer window, she raised her eyes and to her amazement saw the lower corner of the red curtain partly lifted, and back a foot or so from the portal she beheld the face of a man, cadaverous and death-like, looking at her. In another instant the curtain dropped and moved no more.

Now I have said twice already that my cousin was a sensible, cool-headed woman, not given to fainting or hysterics or anything of that kind; but while I want that understood, yet she was a woman and had some nerves. If she had ever doubted the last fact she did so no longer. She also found that she had an extra supply of blood and that it had suddenly poured itself back on her heart, and there was a curious ringing in her ears and something got the matter with her breathing apparatus. But she rallied, buttoned her gloves, arranged her veil, saying, "O pshaw," and walked away.

The next morning, as soon as business houses had opened, my cousin went down town and sought the office of the Agent of the vacant home. He looked up from his morning paper at her entrance, and when she made known her errand visibly warmed up and even showed cordiality. This

hearty manner became graciousness itself when the visitor said she was willing on the morrow to pay down a quarter's rent in advance.

There was a lurking smile, however, in the corner of his mouth when his new lessee requested certain repairs and additions to be made. But if he suspected in his heart that after one night's occupancy of the house she would be glad to get away and never mention restorations and alterations again, he did not betray the secret thought, but promising all should be done that could in reason be demanded, he placed the house keys in her hand and courteously bowed her out of the office.

Outside of a few jewels and some heavy mahogany furniture the only other personal possession of my cousin was a negro woman named Maria. She had been a faithful family servant for a number of years, and though fifty years of age was strong and active, and knew not what it was to have an ache or pain. As the family had dropped into the grave one by one, all of Maria's love had settled upon my cousin, the solitary survivor of the old Southern household.

Like all the colored race, Maria was deeply superstitious and a firm believer in ghosts, witches and other interesting characters of the cemetery and mid air. My cousin knew it would

never do to tell her all concerning their new dwelling; that if she did, such would be the fears of the woman that the idea she now had in her mind could never be carried out. Her plan was to go to the house in company with Maria that very afternoon and spend the night supplied with a lounge for herself, a pallet for the servant, a couple of chairs and small table, a lamp and lantern, and armed with a heavy walking stick which could have felled an ox, and the saber once wielded by her father.

Maria looked somewhat disturbed when my cousin told her they would pass the first night in the house alone; but when she saw the gloomy looking building she exhibited still greater signs of alarm, and when the cartman who had brought their little load laid the articles down before the door and seemed anxious to get away, casting furtive glances about while my cousin was settling with him, Maria fairly broke down and exclaimed:

“Whut fur, Miss Amy, you gwine to stay in sich a lonesome whippoorwill place? Why doan you wait till yer boders come?”

“No,” replied my cousin, firmly, “we will get the place cleaned and fixed up before the boarders arrive, and we can attend to that better here than by staying up town.”

“You mean, Honey, ef de Lawd spares us. I nuvver seed sich a lonesome place. I feel like we gwine ter be kilt hyer in col’ blood.”

So muttering, grumbling, and groaning she followed my cousin as she tried first one key and then another, and at last opening the front door entered the hall. The passage had a damp, mouldy smell from having been long shut up, and my cousin told Maria to throw up the side windows, which the woman did with cautious turnings of her head meanwhile to see if anyone was approaching her from the rear.

By the time the two women had swept out the lower hall and front room, brought in the chairs and lounge, set the couch up and made the two beds, it was dusk.

Lighting their one lamp and placing it in the hall, my cousin sat down on the steps of the portico for a little thought and rest. The locusts in the trees were at their old drowsy song. The street in front was a quiet one and there was but little passing on it day or night. But she had come to investigate the mystery of this house. She wanted the place, had concluded to take it, and was determined to find out at the beginning all about its uncanny history.

She had gathered enough by hearsay about ghosts, to know that they seemed to prefer mid-

night for their promenades at home and abroad, and she was informed by the hands of her little gold watch that she had nearly six hours to wait. So she was naturally astounded when an unearthly yell proceeded from within the hall, followed by a black body making for the steps; the yell and body both belonging to Maria.

In answer to the quick repeated question, "What on earth is the matter?" Maria gasped out that she had seen "sumpin' white standin' up dar at de head uv de stairs."

My cousin promptly ran into the hall, caught up the lamp and holding it above her head gazed upward to the head of the staircase, which wound to the left and disappeared in the gloom of the second story. There was nothing to be seen, so she went up as high as the turn in the stairway and threw the light in the upper hall—but all was empty and still.

As a first experience the above was not very reassuring, and brought from Maria the most earnest entreaties:

"Fur de Lawd's sake, Miss Amy, les' git away f'um dis Gawdfursaken place an' let de Ghosses hev it to dey selves."

My cousin, in reply, told Maria not to be silly, and led her out on the porch where she could see the twinkling street lamps and note an occasional

passerby. Then sitting on the top step she sang some of her favorite ballads with her back to the door, while Maria on the third step affecting to be listening to the song turned her eyes continually toward the hall entrance as if she momentarily expected a Ghost or the Devil himself.

At eight o'clock they arose to go in. They barred the hall portal, lowered the windows, and entering the front room locked that door, put the stick and saber in a convenient place, trimmed the lamp and placed the lantern, with some matches, by the side of the lounge.

Maria, in spite of her alarm, was sleepy headed like her race, and soon fell into a deep slumber. My cousin sat up reading a couple of hours. She had intended keeping awake all night, but being unusually tired from the long house hunting trips of the week, the wearied body asserted itself, and she, too, was soon in the land of dreams.

Suddenly she was aroused by the sound of a heavy fall which seemed to come from the room just overhead. In an instant she was wide awake, and sitting on the side of the lounge listened most intently. Maria was still asleep and had heard nothing.

Everything remained perfectly quiet for fully five minutes, when the bells in the house began to ring. She could plainly distinguish that it

was not the front door bell, but those which hung in the dining room and the room beyond, where there were fully half a dozen connecting with different parts of the house.

Maria was now wide awake and thoroughly frightened. The whites of her eyes became two circles while she grasped her mistress by the arm and whispered hoarsely:

“Miss Amy, whut in de name of de Lawd is all dat?”

“We are going to find out,” answered my cousin firmly, while making a movement to the door.

“Laws-a-mussy, Miss Amy,” said the terrified woman; “you sholy ain’t gwine outen dis room an’ ’peril yohse’f dat way ’mungst all dese Ghosses and whut not?”

“I certainly am,” replied my cousin, in a firm tone. “I am going to get at the bottom of all these strange midnight happenings before another day dawns.”

So, giving the walking stick to Maria, taking the sword for herself and holding the lantern in her left hand, she quickly opened the door and stood for a moment listening and peering upward into the shadows of the stairs and upper hall. Distinctly they heard muffled footsteps as if some one was descending the second flight and coming

down the passage to the first landing, but they died away and no form appeared at the head of the staircase.

The third time the bells began ringing. Turning the lamp up to its full height Cousin Amy started at once in that direction, bidding Maria to follow her closely, a perfectly needless command, as that panic-struck personage had no idea of being left behind. On entering the dining room she observed the clapper of the solitary bell in that apartment swaying to and fro, though making no sound, and on going into the small passage beyond found all those which hung there in a row in a like tremulous condition. Even while she was looking at them they began to ring again as did the one they had just left, and two others they could hear in the servants' room on the second floor.

At the sight and sound of these unearthly doings, Maria came very nearly falling, and with a most beseeching wail in her voice, cried:

“Fur de Lawd’s sake, Miss Amy, less git outen dis infunnel ole house. I’m fitten to drap now an’ my heart done stop beatin’.”

Cousin Amy was herself quite pale, but the spirit of the man who once wielded the sword was in the daughter, and the white hand grasped the saber in a way which meant trouble to any

thing thicker than moonshine. Speaking firmly to Maria, she said:

“If you drop down here, then whoever may be in the house will be certain to get you; but if you stick to me and do as I tell you, you may come out all right.”

Maria saw the point and said nothing more about “drappin’.”

My cousin saw that the wires from the bells in the passageway, with the one in the room, ran along the wall near the top of the ceiling and disappeared in a large closet located in a corner of the apartment. Approaching it she opened the door suddenly with lamp uplifted and sword drawn. There was nothing to be seen only some empty shelves, and a kind of boxing six inches square which extended from one side of the closet to the other. This she at once recognized as containing the bell wires. She stood looking at it for a full minute, and then a very queer look came upon her face.

Her next move was toward the hall stairs, and with an order to Maria to hold her brass lamp high, she led the way upward to the second floor. At the top they listened, and again heard the soft retreating steps. Going to the room from which the sound of the fall proceeded, and turning the knob of the door, only emptiness, dust, and some litter were revealed.

Here my cousin stood full of thought for several minutes. Could the sound have come from this room or the one above on the third floor? Turning, they went from chamber to chamber, but quietness and vacancy met them everywhere. They next mounted the second flight which led to the third story, and paused to take breath and reconnoiter. This floor corresponded to the second with the exception of a lower ceiling. A narrow stairway led to the attic, from which the dormer windows projected.

As they stood together, a puff of wind swept by them from the attic bringing the odor of something dead, so sickening that both had to cover their nostrils.

Maria had just whispered, "Dey's sumpin' dead up dar, Miss Amy," when suddenly she gave a loud scream, her lamp flew up in the air and fell, with the crash of the glass chimney, from step to step to the bottom of the stairs, rolled a few feet on the floor and stopped with extinguished light.

Cousin Amy instantly grasped the agitated negro who now looked ready to follow the lamp, and demanded:

"What on earth is the matter, Maria?"

"Wut's de mattah!" gasped the trembling woman. "Why, ev'ything is de mattah. Sumpin'

cole dun toch my nekked foot. I speck 'twuz dat dead man in de attick."

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" jerked out my cousin, impatiently. "I thought you had seen something."

"I dun wuss 'en see him. I dun felt him."

"Felt who?"

"Why, dat dead man in de attick."

"Who said there was a dead man in the attic?" asked my cousin, sharply.

"Who say'd it? Nobody say'd it. I dun smelt him," replied the woman, with an air of one who had clinched a matter and there was now no question or appeal in the case. Then, as they heard the bells beginning to peal forth again down stairs, Maria burst forth into a torrent of entreaties.

"Miss Amy, Honey Chile, less git away fum dis hyer place. Fur de sake uv yer Maw an' yer Paw in Heben, less git outen hyer. Whut dey think ef dey could see you hyer in dis ole chunnel house. Drat de ole barn, I wish I hed never seed it. Jes' lis'n ter dem bells down stairs ur ringin' fur dead niggers. Oh, Miss Amy, fur de Lawd's sake, an' fur yer ole Mammy's sake, less go."

But the pleading words and coaxing tones all failed with my cousin, who, taking up her sword and lantern, which she had laid down in order to

help Maria up from the floor, approached the room that was located over the chamber where the sounds of falling had been heard. Like all the other apartments of the house there was only emptiness, dust, some straw and bits of paper.

Cousin Amy opened the door of the closet, peered behind the chimney, glanced into the corners, tapped the wall, but could make no discoveries. As they stood silent after the investigation they heard the town clock striking the hour of one. A moment later a peculiar grating sound as if a file was being used just outside of the window, fell upon the ear. Maria, whose nerves were by this time all shattered, said, with chattering teeth:

“Miss Amy, do you hyer dat dead man grittin’ his teeth?”

“Nonsense,” answered my cousin, “how can a dead man grind his teeth?”

Then going to the window she raised the sash and quietly opening the shutters looked out. It was a beautiful starry night, and the Great Bear in silver outline was stretched above and along the horizon; but my cousin had no eye nor thought of astronomy or celestial beauties at this time. Her glance was first directed to the ground and then to the side of the house to see if there was a burglar crowned ladder anywhere near. But

neither man nor ladder were in sight. Then, gazing fixedly for several minutes at something outside, she closed the shutters, lowered the sash, and taking up the sword and lantern walked out into the hall. Again she had that queer look on her face.

When she started to the attic, Maria became eloquent in her pleadings and protests against "gwine whar dat dead man wuz."

But her mistress pressed up the stairway, and, as Maria preferred facing a dead man in company to being left alone in the dark, she followed her with alacrity of feet but great heaviness of heart.

The attic door was open, and as they drew near the stench became almost unbearable. But Cousin Amy, keyed up to a high pitch, fairly plunged her way inside the door, uplifted her lantern and stood for a moment transfixed at the sight of an object lying in the middle of the floor!

In another instant she hastened to a small side window and let a draft of pure night air into the room, while Maria, with her apron covering mouth and nostrils, exclaimed in muffled accents:

"Well, laws-a-mussy, who'd a thunk it?"

My cousin, with another glance at the object on the floor, turned to the right hand window where she had seen the face looking down at her

in the yard. Entering the recess with her lantern and peering around a wooden frame that was leaning against the wall, she suddenly encountered the face!

It, however, was not looking at her, but toward the window. Walking quietly from the place, Cousin Amy left the room and passed down the stairs, this time Maria leading the way "to be in de light so sumpin' koodn' grab her f'um be-hin'."

As my cousin went down the three stair cases into the room on the first floor which they had occupied, she had again a very peculiar expression of countenance.

Locking the door and placing the lantern on the table to burn through the night for Maria's sake, she reclined on her couch and composed herself for sleep. Maria affirmed she was afraid to lie down, and so sat up at the foot of her Mistress' bed, and nodded through the balance of the night in true darkey style. The sight of her dumpy figure, big red bandana handkerchief on her bowing head, the sleepy eyes suddenly opening, rolling around in quest of spirits, and then slowly closing again, was a spectacle that even if it did not scare a ghost, would have given him, her, or it, whatever may be the gender of a wraith, a great deal of wonder, not to say amusement.

Who can tell but the ghosts of the house watched her that night. In fact one did come and sit in a chair by the fire-place and contemplated the nodding woman as, sitting on the floor with back to the wall and outstretched feet, she measured off the remaining hours with dippings, rollings, jerkings and oscillations of the head in general. I don't know what he thought, for he said nothing, but after a while got up and left as he came in, without opening the door.

* * * * *

Next morning my cousin wrote the following notes, all of which she dispatched by the hand of Maria. The first was to a druggist and read:

Mr. Chamberlain:

Please send me by my servant Maria, thirty grains of strychnine. I enclose the money.

Respectfully yours,

Mrs. Amy Balfour.

The second was to the agent of the house, and ran as follows:

Mr. R. L. Merrill,

Real Estate Agent.

Dear Sir: I will take the house and herewith send you check for the first quarter's rent.

In addition to the repairs you kindly promised

to make, there are some minor details to be attended to which you have not noticed, but which I discovered last night by remaining on the premises.

I find that the rats have gnawed a hole in the box casing which contains the bell wires in the closet and in making their nest inside and running over the wires, it occasions a jingling of the bells, especially at night, making an unpleasant and gruesome sound to hear.

I discover, also, a number of rat holes in the walls of the rooms. Please send a tinner with his tools and some strips of zinc or tin to have them covered. This, with a liberal dose of strychnine which I have ordered to-day, will save us hereafter from a company of night visitors whose use of the staircase after bed time until morning, in traveling up and down and jumping from step to step makes another sound not particularly agreeable.

In the front upper room of the second floor and between the ceiling and flooring I am confident there is a plank or joist that is loose or balanced some way so that by the rising of the wind or under the weight of a rat running over it, it makes a bumping, falling sound which is quite startling to hear day or night, but especially at night. By

ripping up a part of the flooring the joist or plank can be removed and the matter rectified.

I also found out last night that the tin guttering on the north side of the house near the third floor has worked loose and makes, when the wind is blowing, a scraping, grating sound. A whole section will fall if it is not nailed on afresh at once.

By attending to these things immediately you will greatly oblige,

Yours truly,

Mrs. Amy Balfour.

A third note was written to a keeper and owner of carts and wagons:

Mr. Gibson:

Please send at once a man with a small wagon to 144 Blank Street, to remove from the attic a quantity of decayed matter in the shape of nearly a cartload of vegetables which the last tenant overlooked and left to rot and produce disease.

In haste,

Mrs. Balfour.

* * * * *

But, says the reader, there are several things you have forgotten to explain, and one was the

great yellow face looking down at your cousin from the dormer window.

“Yes, that is so. It was the face of George Washington.”

“Ridiculous,” you say, “what was George Washington doing up in that old garret?”

“I never said that George Washington was up there, but his face.”

“I suppose you mean his picture?”

“Yes, that’s it; some one had a chromo of the Father of his Country. The face was large and had become yellow with time, and, looking out from a dark background, it was anything but life-like and attractive. The owner of the daub had either tired of or forgotten it, and it had been placed in the window recess as described. Here my cousin found it tilted forward with one corner of the frame resting against the window, so that the face had a downward gaze upon the street.”

“But what about the strange lifting of the curtain that the workman and your cousin both noticed?”

“That is easily explained. Right in front of the picture the window pane was gone, and whenever the wind shifted to the west and blew in, the curtain would be lifted as if by an invisible hand, and that great yellow face would be seen for a moment gazing down in the street and freezing the

blood of superstitious people. One thing is certain, that when Cousin Amy made a fire screen of the picture, and had a new pane of glass put in, the curtain behaved itself from that time, and the only faces that were ever seen afterwards at the window were the countenances of my cousin and Maria."

"But what of the white something that Maria saw at the head of the staircase when she yelled so vigorously?"

"She never saw anything. It was the vivid African fancy with its proneness to see 'sumpin' white' or 'sumpin' black' on the slightest provocation."

"What of the gurgling, choking sound heard in one of the rooms as if somebody was being strangled?"

"Well, that occurred only after a big rain, and was the voice of a choked gutter instead of a strangled man."

"But there is still one more thing you have not cleared up," remarks the reader. "You said that one of the ghosts in the house came in, sat in a chair and gazed at Maria."

"Well, it did; Cousin Amy said so, and she is perfectly truthful. She said, as she lay on the lounge shading her eyes from the light and thinking of the occurrences of the night, that she saw

him enter the door without opening it, and sit down in a chair by the fireplace and look at Maria as she nodded her head in sleep. She said he never uttered a word, but, to her fancy, he seemed amused. She does not know but that he laughed. After a while he got up and went out of the room.

“And you say that he did not open the door either time?”

“He certainly did not.”

“Did he go through the door?”

“No.”

“Well, what did he do, then?”

“He went under the door.”

“Ah, now I see it! It was a rat!”

“That’s just what it was.”

“But you said it was a ghost!”

“I said it was one of the ghosts of the house. Look back and see if I did not say so, and if I did not tell the truth. The rats turned out to be the only ghosts the house possessed.”

“Oh, pshaw,” says the reader.

“Well, that is just what I said when Cousin Amy told me.”

JUDGE DALRYMPLE

Judge Dalrymple

I

THE JUDGE HIMSELF

Mr. John Dalrymple, during the period called the "fifties," was a man of large wealth; but in the "sixties," through the emancipation of the slave and the low value of land, he passed into the financial condition known as comfortable circumstances, a monetary state less than the first, but a grade higher than that of moderate means. This was what a "Demonstration of Blue" from the Northern States did for him.

At the time he is first considered in these pages, there were mutterings of the coming tempest, but the storm had not broken forth yet with flashes of gunpowder and rain drops of minnie balls. So that the subject of this sketch was the owner of a large cotton plantation on the Mississippi River, another on the Yazoo, and dwelt peacefully with his family in a small inland town in a typical Southern home.

The house was most pleasant inside, with its lofty rooms, and broad halls; and quite commanding on the outside, as it stood with its large pilared porch on the summit of a grass covered

knoll or swell of ground looking through a grove of forest trees. Several of these monarchs, as if favorites, and on intimate terms with the family, had drawn near the building, thrown their arms protectingly over it, and lightly placed their finger-like branches with approving and affectionate touch upon the roof.

The dwelling stood partly surrounded by a great shrubbery yard, back of which was an equally large kitchen garden, where pink and purple morning glories climbed posts and trellises, and broadly smiling sun flowers peeped over the fence at their artistocratic neighbors, the peonies, carnations, geraniums and cloth of gold roses.

The hero of this story was not only a gentleman, born and bred, but quite an intellectual man, a scholar, and regular bookworm. He had graduated at college a first honor man, and with the most brilliant promise. There was no field he might have chosen, but those who knew him best felt ready to prophesy that there his gifted mind would assuredly have lifted him up into prominence and pre-eminence. The general impression of his friends at the time of his graduation was, that such were his mental powers and linguistic gifts, that law or politics would and should be his realm. That he did not enter upon one or the other was a disappointment to many.

However, his library at home, consisting of several thousand books on every subject, attested to his literary taste, while lawyers, preachers, members of the Legislature, and Congressmen who had locked horns with him and been worsted in controversies carried on in his own hospitable home, could bear truthful witness to the fact of his being not only a fluent talker, but a debater of the first order. Forensic speech was the man's delight, and when he had before him a foeman worthy of his steel, and minds grappled, and thought flashed, his naturally pale and melancholy face would become illumined and his black eyes fairly blaze with internal fires.

One curious thing about this Southern gentleman was that he sometimes really did not care which side of a question he would take in an argument. He frequently ranged himself on the weak and unpopular wing for the pleasure of defeating his antagonist. And as an indication of the fullness of his mental resources, he was known after obtaining victory for one view of a question, to whip around to the defeated and chagrined column and restore triumph to the vanquished.

No one who knew the man but felt he could have swept into the first place in the Halls of Legislature and Chambers of Law. But to public

life, he entertained a peculiar repugnance, and as his own ample fortune delivered him from the necessity of making his living in that or any other way, he sequestered himself in a small town, almost lived in his Study, and digged and delved in every branch of learning.

The title, Judge, which ornamented his name, was given him, not because he was ever elected or appointed to such an office, but was conferred through the generous spirit of the Southerners, who, prior to the Civil War, Generalled, Coloneled, Majored, Captained, Judged and Esquired everybody who at all impressed them, and captured their favor and fancy.

John Dalrymple, with his street, front gallery, and fireside disputations, looked to the people like he was a judge; and so they made him one, by title, though he never donned the robe of ermine. Once given, no mortal power could reclaim it. He was "judged" not in the scriptural, but the complimentary sense, all the days of his life.

But it is mainly in reference to a vein of dry and yet rich humor which threaded the nature and colored the life of Judge Dalrymple that these pages are written.

Possessed of a keen sense of the ridiculous, and endowed with genuine wit, this Southern character had a way of saying things, and the power

of flinging inward fancies and creations upon the outside canvass in such forms, as not only to amuse and please the beholder, but make the occurrence itself an imperishable memory.

Sometimes, the shaft Mr. Dalrymple shot would be so quietly and deftly winged that the human target did not at first know of the aim or feel the stroke, but the amused chuckle of the Judge showed that the arrow had hit the mark, was sticking in what is called the bull's eye, and was beheld by the optics of others as well.

Our humorist never allowed his pleasantry to last long. A half hour would almost always cover its display. Certain friends of his, from observing this, came to the conclusion that he indulged the lighter mood as some people take a pinch of snuff, or as still others treat themselves to an "outing," or a day's excursion—all for mental relief and refreshment.

Generally the manifestation would take place after a hard day's writing or reading, or a long debate with worthy opponents in the drawing room at home, or in some law office down town. He doubtless felt the need of relaxation and diversion, or there was a natural movement of the mind itself toward a change, a kind of intellectual rebound; so that the Judge allowed, and at times encouraged the sportive kittens and frolicsome

colts of the brain to gambol at will. He smilingly admitted that he needed the enjoyment as an offset to his studious habits and literary work. But many believed that a deeper and truer reason was, that it was in the man; that he relished the mood and practice; that when he left hard Facts and sober-faced Wisdom at home and took Fancy, Wit, Humor and Badinage out for a picnic, he, himself, seemed to thoroughly enjoy the holiday.

The Judge's humor had various ways of expression and manifestation. One of his practices was the altering of the names of his servants. Some of the titles were taken from history, others from life, and still others wrought out new in the factory of his fertile head. The two sons of his carriage driver that had been christened Ralph and Reuben, and were very solemn-looking boys, he dubbed Plato and Socrates. Two sisters were sobriqueted Timbuctoo and Patagonia. When the wife of the family coachman presented her husband first with a child as black as ebony, and a year later with another who was a bright mulatto, Judge Dalrymple called them Orthodoxy and Heresy. Boy twins born in one of his negro cabins were verbally branded Peter and Repeater. A similar binary appearance of girls in still another humble negro home was signaled by the Judge with the remarkable names Did-you-Ever

and No-I-Never. He refused to change these appellations, though others abbreviated the titles to Ever and Never.

Just before the Civil War, the great modern lights had their reflection in the yard, and most distinguished names were heard addressed to small and insignificant looking specimens of black humanity. The sight of a fight between two youngsters back of a cabin, as they mauled and hauled each other around, brought upon them like a flash, the names of Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln, which in the condensed form of Jeff and Abe, clung to them ever afterwards. Zephaniah, the carriage driver for the family, and the volunteer preacher for his own people, had the aliases given him of Zoroaster and "the Bishop."

It would have puzzled many to have kept up with all the varied nomenclature which Judge Dalrymple rained on everything and everybody in sight. He, through all, seemed to be in his element, and had no difficulty in recalling the names, dates and circumstances of the different cases, while every new title he gave that fitted well, was like a little sunlit billow of pleasure rolling over him.

To visitors of the Dalrymple household, and there were many, it was startling, as well as peculiarly refreshing, to hear the sudden summons of

Daniel Webster from the yard to tell Henry Clay to draw a bucket of fresh water and put it on the shelf; or, Susannah Wesley commanded to get Jezebel and bring a basket of peaches from the orchard to the house.

A second manifestation of Judge Dalrymple's pleasantry appeared in the fresh and happy way in which he coined words and phrases to describe occurrences, or a character before him. These new terms always came forth with a touch of humor upon them, and with such a sense of appropriateness, that the word from that hour became a fixture, and could not be dislodged from the family vocabulary.

The Judge's new term for the application of a switch to a child was "Tidrei." Just why and how this expression was born back of those thoughtful dark eyes, and faintly smiling mouth, no one could tell, but the word from the moment of its birth completely banished from the home all such commonplace terms as whipping, spanking, and chastising. It became the standard and a standing phrase. The child was gravely asked if he wanted some "Tidrei." At first before knowledge of good and evil had entered into his physical garden, the little one, thinking it was some kind of tea or nice drink, said, very eagerly, "yes, he wanted some." But after the first ap-

plication and infliction, it was most amazing to observe the violent shaking of the curly head, when the old question was put, "Would you like some Tidrei?" It was remarkable how the promise of this strange, foreign-sounding dish quieted a fretting youngster. The very inquiry would seem to plunge him in the deepest thought, not to say melancholy. He was doubtless recalling the taste of the dish which had been last served up to him.

Another word, coined by the Judge, was "Briggetty." He first applied it to a young lady who had been on the matrimonial market for some years. Her evident desire to please the other sex, her bird-like hoppings about the room, her languishing glances, side-tilting movements of the head, constant opening and shutting of her fan with a fluttering sound, her twisting and turning about on chair and sofa, with numerous other phenomena, brought forth from the thoughtful, but wide awake, observant man, the words, "she is briggetty."

Asked for the translation of the word "briggetty," he looked up with a merry sparkle in his eye and answered, "the definition is, wants to get married." The next moment he took up a treatise on Ancient Egypt, and seemed absorbed in its pages.

From that moment the word was admitted into the vernacular of the family. In addition, however, to this, it worked its way through the various outlying circles of near relatives, distant kindred, friends and acquaintances, and finally established itself in the dialect of the community. Woe after that to any young marriageable woman with restless ways and nervous movements of the body. She was at once branded "bridgetty"! The whole town saw it and said it, and the Dalrympian sentence clung to the unfortunate female until the grave claimed her form, or her name was changed by means of a circuit clerk and a clergyman to the patronymic of another.

II

THE GARDENER

In addition to his indebtedness to the household and plantation servants for occasions and causes of amusement, Judge Dalrymple obtained not infrequent mental diversion and refreshment from conversations held with his gardener, Michael O'Flaherty.

The latter was a native of the Emerald Isle, and fifteen years before had emigrated to this country to better his fortunes, or more truly speaking, his misfortunes. From working on the

river levees, and ditching in fields, he had taken to gardening, and finally drifted to the town of Bridgeton, where he performed all kinds of odd jobs until he fell under the notice of Judge Dalrymple, and presented himself a candidate for the position of keeper and tiller of his flower yard and kitchen garden.

When Michael first stood before the Judge, the success of his application was assured if from nothing more than his personal appearance.

The ends of his red shaggy eyebrows had a comical twist upward, creating the impression that he was about to laugh, had it not been for the downward droop of the corners of his mouth, which indicated as clearly a disposition to cry. The nose, however, sided with the eyebrows in the tie vote of the countenance, and by its unmistakable "turnup," secured the majority in the facial decision for comicality. This victory by the nostril was won not alone by its sudden skyward lift at the end, but by its color, which, from long proximity to a stubby black pipe, had assumed the tint of fine burnt old china, or richly glazed porcelain.

Judge Dalrymple saw with a glance at Michael that he would be to him the equivalent of outings, excursions, and even mountain and seaside resorts. He inwardly agreed, as Michael, with

a shrill, squeaky voice had urged his own claims, "that twinty dollars a month, with beer, bed, and board found, would be chape enough."

"It certainly will," replied Judge Dalrymple, thinking of a very different thing from Michael. "You can consider yourself engaged."

And so the son of Erin was installed as head over the flower and kitchen garden, taking his meals at the second table and sleeping in an office in the back yard.

While Judge Dalrymple was concluding arrangements with his prospective gardener, Michael's eyes had taken in the sight of the thousands of volumes lining three sides of the Judge's study. Recalling, at the same time, what he had heard around town about this same gentleman's learning, he conceived the silly notion that he would rise higher in the confidence and good graces of his employer if he would lay claim himself to considerable literary attainments.

With this brilliant idea in his mind, and which he regarded as a happy inspiration, and for which he paid dearly in mental torture thereafter through the humorous turn of Judge Dalrymple, Michael in a single hour, if not moment, became a deeply read man, and made for his pedestal that which turned out to be a pillory.

In coming into the garden that very afternoon

to give his employee some general directions, Judge Dalrymple casually dropped a remark about a certain book on horticultural and landscape gardening, a real scientific volume, when to his surprise, Michael declared he had read it.

A few adroit questions from the Judge brought out the literary humbug before him, and caused the laying of his plans at once. Without a sign being exhibited that he suspected the genuineness of Michael's claim to a wide and diversified reading, Judge Dalrymple proceeded to put questions and drop remarks in a manner calculated to puzzle a stronger head than that of his gardener. But, behold, Mr. O'Flaherty had read all the books that were mentioned; some while crossing the ocean, others in a mysterious kind of Public Library, and still others from an equally indistinct individual called Jamie McFadden, who kept a book stall somewhere and had loaned or sold him the volumes.

If pressed to declare a part of the contents of the book under discussion, he really "disremembered" the exact language just now, "but it was a moity fine book, to be shure." His excuse for such a wide range of forgetfulness as was soon manifested on his part, would be accounted for at another time by "biliousness in the spring." In the summer his memory was not reliable. The

autumn months brought a dizziness to his head, and in the winter, dates and names, as well as general facts, seemed to leave him.

Driven soon to other points of attack, the Judge began to invent the most remarkable titles that were ever heard or not heard of, seen or not seen on the side or back of a book; but Michael O'Flaherty was never taken aback; astonishing as was the name, and amazing the subject treated, he had seen or read portions of that very volume, "and, faith, it was an illegant book."

On discovering the length and breadth of this peculiar weakness, Mr. Dalrymple did anything but grieve. Sauntering into one or the other of the gardens, where Michael would be using the spade, hoe, or great shears, as he was working amid vegetables, flowers or the hedges, the Judge would begin a conversation, wherein all manner of verbal traps and pitfalls would be laid, and into which the gardener would most incontinently fall every time, and yet never seem to realize the full extent of the catastrophe.

"Good morning to you, Mr. O'Flaherty; the top of the morning to you."

Michael would take his foot from the spade and, resting his arm upon the handle, would reply in his rich brogue, and with those peculiar rising inflections heard so often in Irish speech:

“The same to you, Meester Dalrymple, and all the mimbers of your family.”

Then the employer would gradually introduce various topics of a literary character and speak of volumes with most remarkable titles which he had himself invented. But simple or complex, it was all the same to this accommodating son of Erin, who, it seems, had perused everything from an Egyptian Scroll dug out of the sands, to the latest publication found on the shelf of an American bookstand. One morning the question was:

“Mr. O’Flaherty, did you ever read ‘Oriental Concoctions’?”

“Yis, yer Honor, and it was there that I got that blissed resait for me rheumatism.”

“Still,” continued Judge Dalrymple, musingly, “it was not equal in merit from a strictly literary point of view to the second volume which came out five years later called ‘Syracusan Depredations.’ I suppose, of course, you read that, also?”

“Rade it! Shure, and I jist poured over it! I ups and gives siventý cents for a sicond-handed copy to Jamie McFadden, what kapes the old book stall in New York.”

“Do you remember,” queried the Judge, in a thoughtful, all but dreamy voice, “how Lord

Cornwallis grieved over killing the only son of Charlemagne at the battle of Salgamundi?"

"Remimber it! Didn't I tell Jamie McFadden it was the foinest thing in the book." All this with evident uneasiness.

"Still," pursued the Judge, with his reflective voice, "I have been compelled to think that the last work of Mr. Periwinkle, the author, is the best of the three. Doubtless you remember the name; it escapes me just now."

"Shure, and no name is any better remimbered, but in the Spring of the year. I gets a little bilious —."

"Was it not Hypotechnic Concatenations?" broke in Judge Dalrymple.

"Thrue as ye spoke the word, that was the name," replied Michael, while his eyes assumed a wild look, and he wiped off the heavy drops of moisture from his forehead. His mental labor was evidently proving more exhausting than his manual toil.

"Do you recall in it," continued the inexorable Judge, "the touching farewell of Napoleon Bonaparte to his youngest daughter on her marriage with the Prince of Abyssinia?"

"Now, didn't I shid tears over it, and rade it to Jamie McFadden, and the spalpeen couldn't slape that night for thinking about it!" All this

was said by Michael, with an attempted air of melancholy, while he was anxiously wishing the "Concatenations," with all the other "Oriental Concoctions" had gone up in the "Syracusan Depredations," no matter whether those "depredations" were pigs in a pratie field or raids of the police on a disreputable row of tenement houses in the darkest part of a great city.

At junctures like these, the Judge, seeing that the mental wagon of his gardener was already overloaded and could carry no more for that day, would withdraw, leaving Mr. O'Flaherty with one foot on his spade, wiping his face, shaking his head vigorously, and breathing as if he had been running a race.

As for the Judge, he would retire to his Study, or to one of the quiet nooks in which his shrubby yard abounded, and there, sitting down on a rustic settee, would, with shaking shoulders, give way to a perfect fit of noiseless laughter, while wiping his eyes and crying out, "Ah-me! Ah-me"! He had attended a picnic, enjoyed an outing, taken a trip, so to speak, to distant lands and secured a brain rest and yet had not left home.

Ten minutes afterward, the grave, thoughtful face would be bent over manuscript, which appeared afterward in the literary world in the

form of a volume on Mathematics, a second on Astronomy, and a third on Theology, all three of which were pronounced by able critics, on both sides of the water, as books evidencing beyond question that a master mind was their author.

III

THE COACHMAN

Among the negro servants who idled around the house and yard of Judge Dalrymple, nodded in the sunshine, went through the motions of doing something, and yet never did much of anything, was Zephaniah, the driver of the family carriage. His special work was to groom the two steeds which drew the equipage, and to drive Mrs. Dalrymple therein about once a week to Bloomville, the county seat, some ten miles away, on a shopping expedition.

The vehicle was quite a stately affair, and boasted three springs, two of which were placed transversely on the back axletree, thus allowing, if not causing a rocking and rolling movement when in progress that gave to it a flavor of the sea. The driver's seat was almost on a level with the top of the vehicle, so that when the carriage movement was in its greatest oscillations through

ruts in the road, the coachman had to respond with his body in opposite bendings in order to keep his seat at all; so that in addition to suggested figures of billow and ship, the imaginative mind could easily see the sailor on the stormy deck, trying to bring the vessel home.

The two horses, called Gath and Goliah, by Mr. Dalrymple, were mates in size, but not in color; one being a glossy bay, and the other a dappled gray. Both were large and quite lazy from lack of work, and overfeeding. They had a way of arching their necks and champing on the bit until the froth dripped from their mouths. They, also, were given to trotting sideways. They could not be said to lack motion when hitched up and driven, but it was more of a vertical than a horizontal procedure. In the words of stable men, "they could trot all day long in the shade of one tree."

It was a spectacle well worth beholding to see Zephaniah arrayed in a tall beaver hat which somebody had given him, and buttoned up to the chin in a long tail black coat discarded by Mr. Dalrymple, sitting solemnly on his lofty perch, and driving Mrs. Dalrymple into Bloomville, with the dignity that a royal charioteer would escort a queen into London.

Mrs. Dalrymple, all powdered, ringletted and

brocaded, sat exactly in the center of the back seat, and gazed in a kind of reverie out of the carriage window at the slowly passing scenery, while Gath and Goliah flung the foam from their bits, tossed their heads, made a curious jugging sound in their stomachs, and trotted sideways down the road until out of sight of the town.

Zephaniah, on such trips, wore his stovepipe tilted back at an angle of forty-five degrees, held his whip poised over the horses, kept his eyes fixed immovably upon them, and looked exceedingly dignified. He, without question, greatly appreciated the position he held, and, though he gave no sign to that effect, yet was perfectly cognizant of, and enjoyed as well, the admiring and wondering glances which were cast upon him by his own family and fellow servants, as he drove down the public road with his mistress or swept back in the afternoon or evening with the seats loaded with paper bundles and packages purchased by that lady in the County Emporium.

The steeds, Gath and Goliah, were made the medium by Judge Dalrymple of obtaining no little amusement at the expense of Zephaniah. For, be it understood, that with all his dignity, the carriage driver was not famous for intellectual brilliancy or profundity. Perhaps, in this respect, he may not altogether be alone. In fact, history and

life are full of hints that Dignity can exist, and even flourish, without brains or merit. "Sirs," says the triumphant psychological explorer and investigator, "I find it can exist without anything!"

Anyhow, to come back to Zeph, he was not particularly bright, and was easily mentally confused. In recognition of this, Mr. Dalrymple was accustomed to give an order to his coachman which, while causing amusement to the master, invariably brought perplexity to the mind and a woe-begone countenance to the servant. The command at first appeared simple enough, but it had a way of becoming a mystery and developing into a profound puzzle in the course of a very few minutes. The order was:

"Zoroaster, I want you to turn out the Bay to-day, and saddle the Gray."

Zeph would say, "All right, Mars John," and go towards the stable repeating the words so as to make no mistake. "Turn out the Bay and saddle the Gray; turn out the Bay and saddle the Gray; turn out the Gray and saddle the Bay; turn out the Bay and saddle the Gray; turn out the Gray and saddle the Bay," and by the time he had gone one hundred yards he was hopelessly in the dark as to what was to be done.

Of course, he had to return to Mr. Dalrymple,

who would look up with a bland smile from his book or writing at the mystified countenance of the servant as he said:

"Mars John, I done clean forgot whut hoss I mus' saddle, en which un I mus' tu'n out. Am it Gath or Goliah?"

"Didn't I tell you," said the Judge, with twinkling eyes, "to saddle the Bay and turn out the Gray?"

"Yes, sah, you sho'ly did," answered Zeph, expanding into a broad grin, "but some how er nuther, Mars John, dem hosses gits mixed foh I kin reach de lot."

"The way to manage it," replied his master, "is to keep repeating my order until you come to the stable."

"Dat's de vah'y thing I done did, sah, en dars whar I got all mussed up, en puts de saddle on de wrongst hoss."

"The only thing to do," said Mr. Dalrymple, with assumed gravity, "is to try again. I believe, however, I will change my mind about the horse and use the Gray instead of the Bay. So please turn out the Bay and saddle the Gray."

Zephaniah at once started off with the facial expression of a mathematician having a great problem on his mind. Mr. Dalrymple could see his mouth working as he walked away, and knew

he was whispering "turn out the Bay and saddle the Gray," thus trying to keep the order fixed and correct in his mind until he could lay his hands upon the horses themselves. By and by, he saw Zeph stop, look down on the ground, scratch his head, go on again, look up in the air, turn around, make several circles, start back for the house, stop again, wheel toward the stable, drag his feet heavily after him, and, reaching the lot gate, lean his head in evident despair upon one of the posts.

Upon seeing this, the Judge sank back in a chair and shook with silent laughter until it looked as if his shoulders would be dislocated.

It rarely happened that Zeph brought the right horse to the hitching rack or mounting block, but it really did not matter, as Mr. Dalrymple's rides were very short ones, and both animals were fairly perishing from lack of exercise, much less work. When, therefore, as it most frequently occurred, the wrong steed would appear, the Judge would say nothing, and Zeph, thinking he had remembered rightly, would take the first easy breath he had drawn in the last half hour.

Zephaniah, alias Zoroaster, as Mr. Dalrymple would occasionally call him, was, as has been said, also an exhorter or preacher in his church. Sunday afternoon and night he exercised his gifts

on a little sable flock in town, and sometimes preached on the Dalrymple plantation a few miles away. What he lacked in intellect he made up in lung power, and where he failed in expounding, he certainly succeeded in pounding. Possessed of a rich, full voice, with a tremulous movement to it that he could summon up at will, and which peculiarly affected his hearers, Zeph's fame had gone forth over a number of plantations, penetrated the Black Jack neighborhood, and even reached Piney Creek, some eight or ten miles north of the Bridgeton and Bloomville road.

Having only a couple of fat, lazy horses to feed and curry, a carriage to wash and drive, Zeph had abundance of leisure time on hand wherein to prepare his sermons for the next Sabbath. This may have accounted in part for a great way he had of talking to himself in the barn and lot. In addition to the enjoyment of listening to himself, he loved to hear others, but mainly for the reason that it furnished an excuse for him to stop work. Zeph's crowning joy was to hold forth to others on monologue lines, his favorite subjects being "Moh'als en 'Ligion." He had other topics, but these seemed to lie nearest to his heart.

It is to be regretted, however, that all of Zeph's auditors did not have confidence in him. The fact was to be chronicled that on certain occasions, the

carriage driver and exhorter would come into possession of a peculiarly fragrant breath, attended with difficulties in holding up the head and walking straight. And while it is true that at those times Zeph would talk more about religion than ever, yet the faith of quite a number were shaken in him. Still, he had his following, and Mr. Dalrymple pardoned and forgot these wanderings of his servant because of their great rareness, and on account of the numerous remaining excellences of the slave.

It was one of Judge Dalrymple's keenest pleasures and recreations, as well, to inveigle Zephaniah into an argument, theological, ecclesiastical, religious or otherwise in character, and leave his servant, not knowing, figuratively speaking, whether he was on his head or heels.

Zephaniah was wordy, without being brainy, and his efforts to escape Mr. Dalrymple's verbal traps, pitfalls and sentence entanglements; his advances and retreats; his absurd answers, and oftentimes his overwhelmed mental state, while his master talked on with a most imposing array of jaw-breaking and remarkable sentences, afforded a psychological phenomenon not set down in books and rarely to be beheld in life.

One afternoon Zeph was leaning against the stable gate and communing with Polydore, a lame

darkey who slopped the cows, fed the pigs and attended to the woodpile. He was having the double pleasure of hearing himself talk and of being heard by another. With his arms resting on a transverse bar, and his eyes fixed on the "Big House" that he might not be surprised in his neglect of the day's labor, Zeph enlarged on the mysteries of toothache.

"Doan tell me nuffin 'tall 'bout no toof. Doan tell me 'er man's toof ain' got no sense. I tells you I knows better. Kaze whut mek dat toof er mine 'haive lak hit did? W'en de mizry was moh'n I could stan', en I sot down in dat chur fur dat doctor ter pull hit out; w'en dat toof seed dat par er tongs dat man 'gin ter poke in my mouf, I tell you de Gospill truf, dat toof done stop achin' right den an dar! I riz up en tole dat Doctor, dat I was mistook, dat de toof was all right, but de mizry was in my haid. An', Suh! he sholy lak ter cuss me ouden de office."

"Now den," continued Zeph, crossing one finger with another, as he had seen Judge Dalrymple do in an argument, and gazing at Polydore with a wise and solemn look, "w'at you reckon dat toof do arter dat? I doan moh'n git two mile fum town, en cross de ferry, en ain' got no money ter git back ter dat doctor, w'en dat toof riz right up en gwine to achin' agin. No Suh! You cain tell

me nuffin' tall 'bout no toof. Dey's got sense I tell you, nigger."

At this moment Zeph and Polydore saw Judge Dalrymple approaching down the path from the house, whereupon they immediately separated, Polydore to the wood yard, while Zeph, retiring into the stable, began diligently raking straw in the stalls of Gath and Goliah, and singing with his tremulous attachment, an old Methodist hymn full of minor notes. When Mr. Dalrymple reached the lot gate and called him, of course Zeph was much surprised, and answered from within the stable:

"Who dat callen me?"

It is needless to say that Zeph was as fully aware that it was his master speaking as that it was himself answering. At the repetition of the call, the carriage driver broke out in a guffaw of sudden recognition and said:

"Well, I 'clare ter grashus, hit's Mars John er callin' me. Whut yer want, Mars John?"

None of this little by-play or acting was lost on the Judge, but he was not a severe master, and so, with some inward smiling, he replied:

"I want you, Bishop. Come here."

The fact was that Mr. Dalrymple had been studying hard all day, and left his library late this afternoon in search of a mental outing. He had hesitated at the fork of the paths leading to

the garden and stable, and oscillated in mind for a while between Mr. O'Flaherty and Zephaniah. But this time he concluded to patronize the coachman.

Zeph hated work, and enjoyed all conversations, but especially those which allowed a great deal of sitting. He always hailed with pleasure, communing seasons with his Master for the double reason that all manual labor ceased with him, and while Mr. Dalrymple soon had him completely mentally confused and bewildered, yet he would secure a fresh supply of high sounding words and phrases, which he carefully preserved, and would bring forth on the following Sabbath to his sable colored, nodding audiences, if not with edification to them, then, at least with gratification to himself.

It was owing, perhaps, to the gathering shadows of the evening, that the Judge selected his topic from the domain of superstition on this occasion, and so clearing his throat and resting one of his long slender limbs on a bar of the gate, he said:

“Zoroaster, do you believe in ghosts?”

Instantly a goodly portion of the whites of Zeph's eyes began to appear, and looking hastily over each shoulder in the direction of the shadowy

parts of the lot, he said, with most unmistakable sincerity:

“Why, Mars John, whut meks you ax me dat question, sah? En cose I do, sah!”

Then followed from Mr. Dalrymple’s lips, a most nerve-trying narration from history and fiction, nothing being overlooked in the matter of accent and proper dwelling upon certain features of the case; while the white circles of Zeph’s eyes steadily enlarged, and from occasional “Humphs” and “Lawd hev musseys,” the Keeper of Gath and Goliah was driven into an almost breathless silence, with restless turnings of body and backward glances toward the darkening stable and gloomy strip of woods beyond.

When Mr. Dalrymple ceased and started to return to the house, Zephaniah made arrangements to make as immediate a departure. Bars were left down, sundry inner doors to the great barn and stable remained unlocked, and Gath and Goliah were decidedly slighted while Zeph rushed through a few necessary duties, hurried over the stile, almost raced along the path through the orchard, and around the back of the garden, until he reached his lowly cabin, where the presence of Cynthy Ann, his wife, and his romping youngsters on the puncheon floor brought him some measure of mental relief.

On this night Zeph stayed closely at home, seemed unusually religious, and sang a number of hymns with great fervor and unction, one of which began,

“Why should we start and fear to die.”

On still other occasions, Mr. Dalrymple would eschew superstition and spiritualism, and approach his servant with ponderous arguments and most remarkable polysyllabic utterances in the controversial fields of Science, Religion, Church and State, and Theology. Of course, there were many sentences which the Judge did not attempt to understand himself.

It was a study to watch the master and slave begin and carry on one of these colloquies, in which they would pass through the lot gate, walk around each other, fall back toward the stable, and wind up sometimes in, or else close to the stalls of Gath and Goliah.

Repeatedly, as the conversation or argument progressed, Mr. Dalrymple would show signs of apoplexy, but would recover; yet later have one of his shaking fits in his arm chair in his study. As for Zeph's face, it was a study, as looks of astonishment and bewilderment, with assumed expressions of wisdom and comprehension of the

subject in hand followed in quick order, not to say disorder, upon it.

“You see, Zoroaster,” said the Judge one morning to Zeph as the carriage driver stood, curry comb in hand, near the barn door, “The cachinations of theological nomenclature have conspired to obliterate the perturbed conditions and relations of sociology, political economy and civil jurisprudence. This in turn has reversed all international transubstantiation and established the logarithm of the general parallax of the universe.”

“Dat’s de vah’y thing I say’d to Cynthy Ann yistiddy,” replied Zeph, rolling his eyes and speaking in a low, awe-struck tone.

“What did you tell Cynthy Ann?” inquired Mr. Dalrymple, with sparkling optics.

“ ’Bout dat log, en dem pair o’ axes youse bin talkin’ bout.”

Mr. Dalrymple gave a sudden snort of the nostrils, but quickly placing his handkerchief over his mouth, cleared his throat and proceeded.

“You know, Bishop, that the affinities of molecular atoms, disregarding the indivisibilities of the terraqueous globe, have insinuated themselves into protoplastic images which have affected the theological lucubrations of many of the ecclesiastical systems of the day.”

"Yes, Lawd! I jes knows dat am de blessed truf," said Zeph, shifting restlessly from one leg to another, while the lines of perplexity and anxiety in his face would have made a Chinese puzzle ashamed of itself.

"Now, Zoroaster," continued the Judge, crossing his left finger with his right, and looking the picture of argumentation and profound deliberation, "the correlating platitudes of all sublunary spheres lead necessarily to plenipotentary positions, and, also, to the final disintegration of all primordial discoveries of the human family, and plunge the differentiations of the various religious denominations into an indescribable vortex compounded of arterial exhalations, scientific abstractions, hermeneutical deductions and the extraneous pomposities of an antiquated valetudinarianism."

As this wonderful and luminous paragraph proceeded, Zeph had assumed a half squatting, half kneeling position on the ground, and, taking a pine splinter from the fence, applied it to his teeth with a most impressed and abstracted look. And now, as Judge Dalrymple paused for breath for a moment, and cast a questioning glance upon his listener, the negro said:

"Dat's jes' whut I bin skeered erbout dis whole time. You jes ax Cynthy Ann ef it tain so."

Mr. Dalrymple coughed violently for a moment as Zeph made this reply, but recovered and resumed.

“Now, Zephaniah, in view of all this, and in case that the deglutition of one church should surpass the intermediate constabulary of another, and the transportation, not to say transmigration, of the first should etherealize the interlinear spaces of the circumjacent diaphragm and capillaries of the second, and the remaining component elements of the body politic should be projected by ordinary compulsory evolution into the cosmical forces of original chaos; what would you do under such circumstances?”

Zeph blew the splinter out of his mouth, raised his head, and said most emphatically:

“Well, Mars John, I’d tun ev’y one of ’em outen de chu’ch, ef de Lawd spared me.”

Here the Judge had one of his curious apoplectic looking attacks, and with a strangling accent, cried:

“A gourd of water! Quick, Zeph, I’ve got a grain of sand in my throat!”

And Zeph, without a grain of suspicion in his mind, ran to the well in the lot and brought back some water in a moment, and gazed sympathetically at his master, who, in attempting to swallow, spluttered in the gourd, and spattered the water

around in a most remarkable manner. Later on the Judge was discovered with one of his shaking fits upon him in a secluded spot in the flower yard.

IV

THE CIVIL WAR

The Civil War broke out at last. It was far enough off at first, but came dreadfully near in a couple of years. Vicksburg fell, gunboats ascended the Yazoo River, and Federal raids, first of cavalry, then of infantry, seamed the State of Mississippi.

Homes were forsaken, cotton bales by the thousand were burned, and families refugeed with their slaves to Alabama and other districts of country still farther in the interior. The silver ware had been pitched in wells by their owners for safe keeping, or buried in remote nooks of the garden or corn field. Horses and mules that had not gone with the "refugees" were rushed to the swamps, only to have their hiding places betrayed by those of the colored people who were glad to welcome the Northern army.

Mr. Dalrymple, always original, hid his handsome gold watch in an old cow horn which he found on the road. Stuffing the large end with moss, he dropped his common looking casket on

the highway, overlooking the fact that while he would not care to pick up such a thing in a walk, other individuals might, could or would. So next day, the bovine head appendage with its hidden treasure was gone, and the Judge instantly secured a largely increased stock of a wisdom of this world which he had not found in his books of geology.

His effort to conceal the family silver was equally brilliant. Discovering a large hollow tree in a grove beyond his field, he drove a number of nails along its inner sides, and swung upon them, at heights varying from three feet to twenty, solid silver pitchers, goblets, dishes, ladles, napkin rings, and whatever else he possessed in the white metal line.

A week later there was a violent storm, when Mr. Dalrymple, mindful of the frail nature of the tree, went forth to the grove to investigate, when, lo! while yet fifty yards away he saw his silver ware flashing through the woods in the sunlight. The hiding place had been evenly split, half falling to the earth and half remaining upright. Part of the silver was on the ground, the rest was glittering in a most attractive way upon the nails on which the Judge had suspended his table treasures.

Mr. Dalrymple, with his second discomfiture,

carried the articles back, and also gave orders that Gath and Goliah, who had been stabled for two weeks in a cane brake, be brought home. A kind of reaction had set in with him. Nevertheless, he was strengthened somewhat in this course by the news that the Federal Gunboats had returned down the Yazoo River to Vicksburg and that there were no raids just now anywhere crossing the State.

But alas for all human hope and calculations in time of war. Only the next day, when the silver was back on the sideboard and Gath and Goliah were in their stalls, suddenly a long blue column appeared emerging from a cloud of dust in the west. It consisted of an entire division, commanded by a Major General, with cavalry, infantry and artillery. A Confederate Texas brigade fell back before it, and the Northern troops rushed into the town.

Mr. Dalrymple was engaged in some deeply absorbing studies, when a dozen troopers galloped up to the front gate. He, with his old Southern courtesy, hardly observing the uniforms, bade them "come in"; but this they were doing already without his invitation or permission. Meantime, a larger company had swept around into the back yard, and shouts, cries and a noise of a most conglomerate character began to ascend from its

depths, as well as lengths and breadths. There were squalls of captured chickens, angry gobblings of pursued turkeys, the crashing of garden pickets, the clatter of horses' hoofs, the oaths of soldiers, and the loud voices of protest from faithful family servants, mingled with the shrill, rich brogue of Michael O'Flaherty.

From the distant streets of the town came reports of pistol shots, the tramp of bodies of cavalry, the roll of wheels, crack of whips, cries of every kind, and an occasional distant boom of a cannon locating the continued retreat of the outnumbered Southerners, as they fell back in a northeasterly direction, pursued by the Federals.

Of course, the Dalrymple silver went; also the contents of the dairy; and all the preserves and sweetmeats in the storeroom and pantry. The yard was swept of every feathered fowl as by a cyclone, while the stables were stripped in a jiffy, and Gath and Goliah were soon no more.

Mr. Dalrymple had taken a few restless turns up and down his side gallery, watching the sweeping away of his personal property; then came away and seating himself on his front porch fell naturally in a melancholy reverie. From this mental state, however, he was soon aroused by the sight of two soldiers trying to ride off on Gath and Goliah. The spectacle was amusing enough

to have brought a smile upon the face of an Egyptian mummy.

Gath and Goliah were not much given to going forward even under the skilful management of Zephaniah. But here, with the awkward jerks and knee pressings of a couple of infantry men, they certainly outdid themselves in side movements, caracoling and throwing themselves in every form of equestrian position. All the bit-champing, head-tossing, side trotting, and lofty rearing of the past were as nothing to the performances which they now rendered as a free exhibition to the terror stricken riders, and mirth convulsed beholders on the street.

The men themselves, knowing nothing of horsemanship, afraid to jump off or let go, held on like grim death, with knees drawn up high and clamping the horses like a vise, while one clutched Gath's mane, and the other had his arms clasped most fervently around the neck of Goliah.

Amid merry cries from fellow soldiers on the street, to "hold 'em down," to "let 'em out," to "turn 'em loose" and "to fling 'em on their haunches," some one got to singing:

"I bet my money
On the bob-tail nag,
And who dar bet
On the bay?"

in the midst of which, lustily-sung and generally joined-in chorus, Gath and Goliah, with their utterly disgusted riders, waltzed, backed, circled, reared, pawed the air, went sideways, and finally disappeared around the corner from the sight of the lamenting Zephaniah, who sat bemoaning their loss at the front gate, and from the gaze of Mr. Dalrymple, who, with shaking shoulders and eyes streaming with mirth, had beheld the absurd spectacle to its close.

Very soon after this Judge Dalrymple and Michael O'Flaherty had to go to "the front," because of a stringent draft law. The latter, being constitutionally and every other way opposed to bullets and bomb shells, secured the position of teamster, and thereafter saw to it that his wagon headed the procession in a retreat, and brought up the rear in an advance. Moreover, the instant he ceased to work for his old employer all of his literary attainments left him like a landslide. After that his boasting lay in the line of fast horses. It is needless to say that he had ridden most of them and seen them all.

Mr. Dalrymple, after being mustered in and assigned to duty in the ranks, was sent one day with an important message from one general to another. He deposited it in his pocket, and, becoming very much absorbed in a work on Natural His-

tory which some one had secured from a neighboring home, forgot all about it for a whole day. This piece of absent-mindedness came near costing the absence of the bodies of an entire Southern brigade in a Northern prison. It also convinced certain parties at headquarters that the Judge would never excel in courier duty.

After this he was stationed as a vidette on the firing line. Becoming greatly interested in some remarkably colored strata on the side of a hill, he got into such an argument about "The Geological Epochs" with a bright-minded soldier companion, that an approaching Federal column planted a couple of balls in him, one in his arm and the other in his leg, while his own picket post saved him and his literary friend from capture at the risk of their lives.

The wounds of the Judge were not fatal, but they led first to a furlough, and finally to his discharge from the army; so the rest of his days he had to depend upon a crutch and walking stick for successful locomotion.

The War, ending with the surrender at Appomattox left the Dalrymples enough of their personal and real estate, as we have previously said, to keep them in comfort; and so, with Zephaniah as general factotum, and Cynthy Ann in the kitchen, things moved along pleasantly enough, if not

luxuriously. The income was slimmer than of yore, and the number of household servants dropped from ten to three, but there was still a warm hospitality extended at the Dalrymple home, and a numerous circle of friends and relatives kept the large house from ever becoming lonely.

As for Zephaniah, he had remained true to his Master through the Raids, the Emancipation period, and the Reconstruction process. Mr. Dalrymple, often accompanied by the faithful servant, would take his morning and evening walk, leaning partly on the arm of the negro and partly on his ebony cane. But the mind of the Judge was always bright and active, and needed no crutch or help of any kind. The Master and freed servant had many long talks together on the subjects indicated in the third chapter, in which the main speaker saw to it that for every ounce of information imparted, he added a pound of mystification.

Meanwhile Zeph never ceased to grieve over the loss of Gath and Goliah. The solitary grain of comfort he seemed to secure in his bereavement being that their captors never obtained any real or lasting enjoyment from their booty; and, as he often said after one of his lamentations,

“Dar’s one thing shore, dat de way dem hosses was er gwine w’en I las’ seed ’em, dey nuvver got

dar. Dey ain' dar yit. Whut dem Sojer men knows erbout dem hosses, ennyhow? Whar dey spec to lan' wid all dare projickin' on ol' Gath an' Goliah? Naw, Suh, dey ain' dar now, an' dey ain' nuvver gwine to git dar. You hyerd me talkin', doan you folks?"

V

A FINAL VIEW

A year or two after the War, Michael O'Flaherty put in a sudden and dilapidated appearance at the back door of the Dalrymple mansion. His condition, without a word being spoken, showed he had passed through hard experiences. Of course, somebody had treated him very badly, and he, according to his account, was an injured innocent, a babe in the wood, so to speak, and not even granted the comfort of another babe to suffer and starve with him in the forest of extremity.

Judge Dalrymple promptly put the stranded man in charge of the garden, and promised himself rich interviews amid the potatoes and cauliflowers. So, loaded down to the gunwale one day with questions, and some most remarkable titles, he hobbled out for the expected talk and enjoyment, and found to his amazement that Michael's

vast literary accumulations had departed. He warmly disclaimed all knowledge of any kind of book lore, whatever, and would not even admit that he had ever seen a Webster's blue back speller. Evidently the memory of his past mental sufferings was still so fresh that the bare thought of entering upon them again was simply unendurable.

So when the Judge said he was confident that Michael had read "The Perturbations and Stagnation of the Original Dissimulators," Mr. O'Flaherty forgot his really high regard for his employer, and made the air rosy and palpitate with some most fervent statements, that he did not know, and did not care to know, and wished that the whole kit and crew of the "nation" Judge Dalrymple was talking about might land in the middle and at the bottom of the hottest world ever known to Astronomy and Scripture!

When the Judge reached one of his nooks in the shrubbery, his shoulders shook longer at this last sally of his gardener than over any other previous saying that had fallen from his lips.

Of course, the Judge continued to obtain a certain measure of amusement out of his hired hand, but not on scholastic lines. It verily seemed that years after the decease of the Know-Nothing party, Michael O'Flaherty became the embodi-

ment of that defunct organization. He insisted continually that he knew nothing.

After a few years, Mr. Dalrymple sank into the grave from the effect of his wounds. In his will it was discovered that, among other bequests, he had left a cabin and twenty acres of land each to Zephaniah and Michael O'Flaherty.

It would be natural that the white and black man, whom the Judge had befriended in life and death, should entertain a peculiar interest in each other. First drawn together by this single human benevolent link, they felt, even in after days, the connecting power, though the benefactor himself was sleeping quietly beneath the sod. They liked to meet because of this earthly friend, and they never met without sounding his praises.

On one Sabbath, O'Flaherty went so far with this kindly sentiment as to attend Zephaniah's church, and take a seat on a back bench. Zephaniah's text was Genesis, Chapter 32 and Verse 10, As he read it haltingly and stumbingly to the close, a Bible student who happened to be present was amazed to hear the following unfamiliar words, "I am not worth the last of all, the Messiah." On returning to his room, the student found that the exact language of the passage was, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies."

Zeph's opening remark was:

“De constabulation ob de circumfluence ob true libbing was in de statuation ob kerecter.”

Michael had been listlessly looking at the rows of woolly heads before him until these remarkable words fell upon his ear. Like a flash his head was bent forward in the most intent listening attitude, while an unmistakable panic-struck expression appeared in his face.

Zeph, with rolling eyes and most eminently satisfied manner over his last deliverance of wisdom, resumed his oracular utterance, and had spoken thus far in the following sentence:

“De pomulsions and conglumergations ob de reconomy——” when Michael arose, suddenly grasped his hat and literally shot from the house.

He never explained his sudden departure, nor could he be persuaded ever to hear his colored friend again, though he was informed that after his pompous beginnings, the preacher would descend to plain English and deliver really good, religious talks. No! Michael wanted no more of it and never returned.

Zephaniah always believed that O’Flaherty got under conviction and had run to escape the arrows of truth. But the true explanation was that Michael felt that if he had not seen Judge Dalrymple’s ghost, he had heard some skeletons of

his words. And so, with suddenly aroused memories of a most painful character, and feeling almost sure that his old employer was behind the pulpit, Michael had become demoralized and departed precipitately, without apology then and thereafter.

Mrs. Dalrymple erected a handsome monument over her husband; and with some mental conception or design of her own, she had two faces chiselled on opposite sides of the tombstone, which were to represent Hope and Faith: the former smiling in an Easterly direction, and the latter gazing solemnly at the West. As these two heads, by some mistaken idea of the sculptor, were made to resemble Mr. Dalrymple, the public said the widow intended to show the two changing moods of her consort, and so there was considerable remark, both mirthful and otherwise. Fortunately she never heard these things, and in time they died away. But as another generation began to spring up, and new people came into the country to settle, a second report was started and spread, that Mrs. Dalrymple had erected the two-headed monument in memory of two departed husbands, and that this accounted for the different faces, one of which looked brightly toward the East, and the other sadly upon the West.

This, of course, brought out more gossip about the dissimilar character of the two dead husbands, and how much happier she must have been with the one who was beaming at the Orient, than with the other whose face was set like a flint toward the Occident.

Happily for all this foundationless talk, and of which Mrs. Dalrymple, now getting old, heard nothing, a great storm arose one night, blew down a tree upon the monument, and ground the two faces to fragments. Mrs. Dalrymple intended rebuilding the shaft, and the next time with three faces upon it, the third to be that of Resignation, looking Southward, or Charity, gazing towards the North. Before she had been able to decide on this important matter, and ere plans had been consummated with a stone cutter, she suddenly sickened and died, and the idea was never carried out.

So the body of John Dalrymple lies to-day at the foot of a group of sighing pine trees, with naught save the moldering foundation of the broken monument to mark his last resting place. But the yellow needles of the palms of the South have woven a rich brown pall for the lowly mound, the pine burrs drop like great tears over the slumbering body, and the whip-poor-will, on a broken

neighboring fence, or in the shadowy depths of a wide-spreading cedar, sings night after night his lonesome song over the ashes of as hospitable, benevolent, gifted and charming a Southern gentleman as ever lived and died between the Potomac and the Mississippi.

THE TWO CRONIES

The Two Cronies

I

DAN AND BILLY

The Yazoo Delta has quite a number of lakes buried in its sylvan depths, some famous for beauty, some for utility, others for sport in the way of hunting and fishing, and still others for all combined. Among the latter was one which we will call Clear Lake. It was a body of water fully ten or fifteen miles in length and three hundred yards in width. In some seasons of the year it was not so broad, but was always a beautiful sheet of water, lined with a narrow fringe of cypress trees and a broad belt of cultivated plantations on one side, and a deep, dark forest on the other. With imposing bends and beautiful views extending one and two miles to the next curve of wooded shore, no one could look upon this work of nature without a feeling of deep pleasure.

It was a rich contribution to the gallery of mental pictures to see Clear Lake at the hours of sun-

set and twilight. At such times both sky and earth contended for the heart of the water beauty, and she, like a coquette, secured gifts from both, taking a rosy flush from the West, a ribbon of light from the sky, and a belt of purple shadows which the forest upon the northern bank urged upon her. Later still, the evening star pinned a diamond on her breast.

The principal crafts on the lake were skiffs, a box-like scow made for trot-line fishing and giging purposes, and the more popular dug-out, a boat of eight or ten feet in length, carved so to speak, out of a single log and made so light and capsizable that a stranger, taking his first ride in one, would be advised not to shift the chew of tobacco in his mouth. They were paddled with one oar, could go very swiftly and made the slightest rippling noise when in full motion, and so were much used in hunting and fishing, besides being utilized for visiting purposes both by blacks and whites. What the gondola was to Venice, the dug-out was to Clear Lake.

The homes of the plantation owners were separated a mile or more from each other, and generally fronted the lake; the "place" itself, at the time of which we write, being rented, and sub-rented to negroes and a sprinkling of white people.

Among the notable characters who lived on Clear Lake was Daniel Bivings. He had come out of the Civil War with no military honor and renown; with no wounds, trophies or treasure; and, in fact, with but little else than a long gray coat and slouch hat. In the general wreck which followed the "Surrender," it was but natural that he should look about for means of support for himself and mother; and, not being a professional man, and not having any capital to start a store, the wisest thing he could do, and, in fact, the only step which was left him, was to rent twenty acres of cleared land, with a two-roomed cabin facing the swamp, and commence farming on a small scale under Major Ellerton, whose beautiful plantation lay stretched for a mile upon the shore of the still more beautiful lake.

Dan was a tall, thin, sallow-looking man of forty. He had a bald head, large, faded blue eyes, and a narrow, Roman nose, the last third of it always red; and a long, straggling beard which had a way of parting and floating over each shoulder when he plowed in the field or rode with any degree of swiftness on horse, or, more properly speaking, mule back.

He was not considered handsome by his warmest friends, while one of his enemies said "that the

devil himself would run if he met him in the dark."

Dan had no special fondness for labor; he was theoretically, practically and constitutionally opposed to it. But the celebrated Hobson's choice (not of Merrimac fame) confronted him and he had to take the plow handles or starve.

He had secured as his plow animal, as well as steed for riding, a tall old mule upon whom he conferred the name of January, but for what reason does not appear unless certain patches of white hair here and there reminded his owner of that frosty snowy month of the year. January, like his master, was not overly fond of work, and showed a constant disposition to stop. He had a way of galloping, when vigorously urged to do so, which showed considerable action of body, but not much progress; it was a great going up and down, but with precious little forward movement. He had also contracted or inherited the affliction of deafness. "He's not only dumb, sir," said Dan, "but deaf." It was not a moderate case of hardness of hearing, that scarcely did the subject justice, for it required something approximating thunder to produce a sensation on the tympanum of the animal's ear. We said it was an affliction, but this was questionable, for this very deafness

saved January from hearing the many bitter and sometimes unmentionable things which Dan said about him, mainly in his presence, and so became a kind of protection to the finer sensibilities of his mule nature.

It was both a sight and sound never to be forgotten when Dan hitched up January and started in the springtime to break up the ground for planting. Everybody knew in a mile's distance the morning the work commenced, as he made more noise than all the other plowers in that part of the plantation.

"Whoa, January! Gee, mule! Haw there January! Don't you hear me telling you to haw? Haw mule! Whoa-haw-mule! Burn your ole hide—is you plum deaf? Haw there, mule! Did anybody ever see such a—whoa, there, January! Whoa—haw—gee!"

And so it went on, all the morning and evening, the woods taking up the echoes, passers-by smiling, while distant negro plowers would say with a loud guffaw to each other across the furrows: "Marse Dan an' Jinewary is in fur it ter-day." And so they were, the mule partly on account of his nature, but mainly through his deafness, having most of it his own way. As Dan grew excited in these plowing experiences his eyes would bulge,

his nose become inflamed, his beard part as January serenely and unconsciously dragged him around, while his voice would take on a tremolo attachment as he vociferated, "Gee-e-e- January—" with a rising inflection on the name that was always lost upon the animal, but invariably convulsed human listeners. Then, as the mule in his deafness kept going on when he should have stopped, and stopped when he should have gone on, Dan would fairly surpass himself in adjectives, expletives and expressions which we could never get our consent to have appear on these pages.

Dan had several faults. One already anticipated was occasional profanity. He said in extenuation that January was the sole cause of it, that he would long ago have been a consistent member of the Church but for that mule. He gravely affirmed that January would have to be responsible for the loss of his soul.

His second fault was tobacco chewing. So great was his fondness for the weed that he seemed rather to eat it than to ruminate with that slow motion of the jaws which other practiced. Then he used every brand, not caring who made it or where it came from, so it was tobacco. The juice from these different grades and qualities trickling

upon and staining his beard with lines of brown, orange and other rich oriental colors, had given him something like a rainbow as a chin appendage. The quids which he masticated and exhausted were so large that there was a legend on the Lake that a hunter mistook one for a black-bird and fired upon it. In expectorating Dan made no less than three distinct sounds, the labial detonation of course, being regulated by the amount of ambia on hand or, rather, in the mouth.

A third moral blemish in Dan's life was an occasional spree. Those who knew him best said that he always had a little liquor in him, and that the color of his nose correctly gauged the amount inside. It was supposed that daily potations kept the pink blossom on the end of his nostrils all the year round. As he went deeper into his cups the scarlet steadily ascended, and when Dan had all he could hold the entire organ became aflame, his eyes would assume a set expression, or a "sot-look," as the negroes called it, and it became almost impossible for the observer to look at the man and preserve his gravity. The attempt to appear wise and solemn as he fixed his eyes and pulled his beard, resulting only in an exceedingly empty and silly looking face and demeanor, made a picture not soon to be forgotten.

But Dan had also a virtue. He was a man of few words. Whether it was that he had nothing to say, or did not care to say anything, for there was a difference of opinion here; yet it was generally admitted that he was a man of remarkable reticence, having only on several occasions been betrayed into a paragraphic utterance. In fact, a neighbor once said of him that "Dan Bivings had said less and spit more in Yazoo County than any man who ever lived there."

The following quite common colloquy may serve to give an idea of Dan's ornate style of speech:

"Good morning, Dan."

"Mornin'."

"How is everything on the Lake?"

"Middlin',"

"Is your mother well?"

"Yep."

"Crop all right?"

"Shore."

"Going to Yazoo City to-day?"

"Yah."

"Will you be back to-night?"

"Uh-hunh."

"Fine day to-day."

"You bet."

When Dan had a few drinks aboard, was seated

on a box, or in a barrel chair before the stove of a country store, he was the picture of drunken gravity. Being asked some simple question, he would pull his beard reflectively for a minute, expectorate, say "Yep," and then roll his eyes around with the air of a man who had delivered himself. If he went deeper in his cups he gave up even his monosyllables, set his eyes, combed his beard with his fingers, and looked like a Judge, Coroner and Undertaker, all three in one.

Dan had periodic movements, one of a weekly and the other of a monthly character. Every Saturday he visited a country store five miles from Clear Lake at the foot of the hills, where he lounged away the day with other equally industrious characters, made his three tobacco sounds, said yep, yah, shore and uh-hunh, and returned late in the evening through the swamp to his log cabin, with the red banner unfurled at varying length along the nostril, his mother having only to glance at this member of her son's countenance to know whether she should get supper for him or put him to bed.

Then once a month he went to Yazoo City. For what purpose was not clear, as he traded on credit at the country store mentioned. But still he would go, and his presence would illuminate again the

streets of the county seat. He would not tarry long, as he came twenty miles, and had to return the same distance. So, with all his loafing around, blending his tobacco juice with that of the weed chewing fraternity, and contributing his "yeps" and "shores" to the general current of street talk, he would every now and then take a glance at the sun, and at four in the afternoon rejoin January, who had been fastened back of a store in a dusty lot that was plentifully garnished with dog fennel and jimson weed.

As January generally dozed away the hours when tied in this interesting locality, and was deaf, as has been narrated, whenever Dan touched the reins, there would be a sudden wakening, violent snorting and backing of the mule, while Dan, dragged most unceremoniously through the weeds, would, with the old tremolo movement of the voice, cry out:

"Did you ever see sech an old fool! Who-o-a there January!"

After this they would loom forth on Mound Street, next up Jefferson, then into and along Main, heading north; January with his three motions, upward, downward and somewhat homeward, and Dan with flapping elbows, parted beard, and set eyes, both rider and steed now evi-

dently agreed upon one thing, and that being to reach home as soon after nightfall as possible.

Billy Buffington, the bosom friend and frequent companion of Dan Bivings, was beardless, round-faced and sandy-haired. He had a way when deeply interested in his own speech of stepping back after one of his remarks, and with his hands on his hips, surveying the person he had just addressed, as if to see whether he could possibly bear up after such a deliverance. At the same time his nostrils would expand, and his eyes had a curious way of enlarging, so that the whites could be seen like a ring around the pupils. He had also a habit, not to say accomplishment, of gathering his lips in a kind of pucker, and then suddenly expelling the air with a "flit" or bullet-like sound, which made one think of a minnie-ball shot from a gun. As he at the same time dropped his head on one side and slightly closed one of his eyes, it greatly strengthened the appearance.

Billy had no drinking habits, but smoked a cob pipe, and indulged in the use of the single by-word, "I Ganny," by which he relieved himself in times of high mental pressure. What it meant we confess to the profoundest ignorance. He also used, as a kind of climax, certain facts in connection with the military history of Robert E. Lee

and Stonewall Jackson, which he seemed to regard as argument clinchers to any statement or speech he had just made. From these latter expressions it was easy to see where his sympathies were in the Civil War. As he himself would say, to visiting friends, "Do you see those two hounds there on the floor? Well, sir, that's Lee and Jackson. That tells the story, sir. That shows you who I am, and where I am, or Stonewall Jackson was no fighter."

Saying this, he would back off, look at one with the white rings around his eyes as if he expected the person to fall over; would next shoot a minnie-ball in the air, and then return to the quiet walks of peaceful life once more.

Billy, like Dan, was a bachelor of forty years of age, or thereabouts. Like many others, he found himself, at the end of the Civil War, stripped of all he once possessed, and had to come down, with great reluctance, to hard work. He rented a small piece of land fronting on Clear Lake, and situated about two miles from his friend Bivings.

His preparation for his first day's plowing, a labor to which he was a perfect stranger, excited the wonder of every passer-by. He carried out to the field with him an umbrella, a wash bowl pitcher and towel, and a large palmetto fan.

Plowing to the end of the row, and then back, he would leave his horse, bathe his crimson face, then get under his umbrella, and there sit for ten minutes vigorously fanning himself. The furrows he made that day were not numerous on account of the frequent washings and fannings and prolonged rests, and they were also quite remarkable for their crookedness. Some one, passing by, cried out: "Hello, Billy, what is the matter with your furrows?" His ringing reply, from under the umbrella, was:

"The sun warped 'em, or Bob Lee was no General."

Two other things greatly militated against his being a successful agriculturist. One was his fondness for fishing and hunting, which would beguile him in the woods or to the Lake shore or Yazoo River; and the other was his friendship for Daniel Bivings. In fact, this intimacy greatly injured the crops of both of these gentlemen. They paid each other two or three visits a week. Billy would come up on his gray mare to see how Dan and his crop was getting on, and they would become so interested in talking about the best way of planting, the finest seed, the longest staple, the highest price, and so forth, that several hours would pass by unnoticed, all to the hurt of the

growing corn and cotton, albeit to the great enjoyment of the Gray and January.

After this, Dan would go down to see Billy, and, either sitting on January or perched on the staked and ridered fence, the unfinished conversation about the crops would be resumed, or reminiscences of the war related for the one hundredth time. Billy, at first, would plow a furrow or so, saying he was badly in the grass, but the talk would become so interesting that it would result in his mounting the top rail of the panel near Dan and then for the next two or three hours great agricultural and military problems would be solved, while January dozed on one side of the fence, the Gray on the other, and the crap grass and the morning glories, with their white, pink and purple blossoms, wound a death embrace around the stalks of the rustling corn. The sunshine gleamed on field and forest, the waves of the Lake rippled in the crisp morning breeze, the field lark dipped his undulating flight across the meadow, and the bright-hued woodpecker sent forth his shrill vocal performance and applauded himself vigorously on a dead limb. It was the very morning that men with the constitutional peculiarities of Bivings and Buffington would enjoy sitting on a fence chewing toothpicks furnished by the splinters of the top rail, and telling how the world might, could, would and should be run.

Dan and Billy were of good stock, as they were fond of saying. While Mississippians born and raised, yet they allowed few opportunities to escape of referring to the Buffingtons of Virginia, and the Bivings of South Carolina. But what with the demoralizing influence of the war, frequent contact with a lower race in the struggle for bread, they had become careless in dress as well as in speech. They discarded neckties about the time they dropped the "g" in all words ending in "ing"; and ceased blacking their shoes close to the date when they turned the letter "e" into "i" in the word get. They had also taken liberties with the English language in other particulars, which the Buffingtons of Virginia and the Bivings of South Carolina would never have tolerated. In fact, Dan and Billy both said so; therefore, it must have been so.

II

THE CAUSE OF DIVISION

In the midst of the warm friendship existing between Dan and Billy there arrived a family to

live on Clear Lake, by the name of Robinson. This household, which was to exercise a great influence in the lives of the Cronies, had come down from the hills whose red clay fields had yielded them such a bare living that they had concluded to try the rich black soil of the swamp. They were in humble circumstances, one wagon containing all their possessions. They moved into a three-roomed cabin on Major Ellerton's place, midway between Bivings and Buffington. The home circle consisted of the father, who was a widower, two gawky sons, of fifteen and sixteen, and a very good looking girl of eighteen, called Amanda, which name the family had abbreviated to Mandy.

The daughter of the Robinsons was a tall, slender maiden with large, dark eyes, and beautiful complexion. She had the habit often seen in certain walks of life of wearing a sun bonnet in the house. She had also the drawling, sing-song way of talking, peculiar to a social plane in the hill country. While at first one would be disposed to smile at and object to this conversational chanting which so encroached on the nasal, yet, modified as it was in Mandy's case, and made melodious by her really sweet voice, the sound at last became pleasant to the ear.

So it did to Daniel Bivings and William Buffington, who, in passing and repassing the house,

would suddenly become thirsty, and made it convenient to stop for sundry gourds of water; and at last, from a mere acquaintanceship, reached the point where, in going by, they would be cordially hailed by Joe Robinson, the father, as he sat in his shirt sleeves on the porch, and told to "light and look at your saddle".

This was considered a highly proper and cordial invitation by both sides, and from alighting and looking at their saddles, Dan and Billy had at different times, but hardly ever together, got first to the gallery, then into the plain front apartment used as a sitting and bed room combined, and finally to an occasional meal with the family. Here Mr. Robinson and his boys ate in their shirt sleeves, while Mandy, with the sides of her sun bonnet flapping about her fire crimsoned face, waited on the table, and with her sing-song voice and pretty rows of teeth, completed the damage already begun in the hearts of her visitors.

Both Dan and Billy were inwardly convinced that the Bivings of South Carolina, and the Bufingtons of Virginia, would have been horrified at the shirt-sleeved spectacle at the table, and highly amused and scornful over the drawl which all the family possessed; but Mandy's eyes, cheeks and trim figure were too much for the social exiles,

and so family scruples and opinions first tottered and then fell with a crash before this spectacle of country charms clothed in red calico.

It was difficult to tell when Mandy was most fascinating. Sometimes she looked best at the churn, stopping the dasher occasionally to bend forward and hear what her admirers were saying. But this attractive vision had to go down before the flitting spectacle at the spinning wheel, as, with the delicate thread in her hand, the girl walked backward and forward, a picture of unconscious ease and grace. Then this in turn sank into inferiority before the supple, bending form and crimson cheeks brought to their rose color by hovering over the skillets and frying pans in the preparation of dinner.

After one of these scenes both Dan and Billy dreamed of palatial homes on the Yazoo River, with steamers passing in front, statuary on the lawn, and a sumptuous sitting and dining room combined, with a table bountifully supplied, and at the head a smiling vision of loveliness in five-cent red calico saying in a sing-song voice: "Husban', hev somethin' mo' on yo' plate?"

When Billy dreamed this dream, he was sure that Mandy was talking to him in her drawling

voice, but awoke to find it was the droning sound of a spinning wheel in a neighboring negro cabin. The awakening was quite bitter.

This attachment was the first division between the two friends. Both were in love with Mandy, and both wanted to conceal it from the other. About these two facts there remained not a shadow of doubt. As to other facts, whether she loved them, and which one she liked best, there was grave uncertainty. To outsiders the girl seemed to feel and act the same toward the Cronies. It was noticeable that she began smiling the instant she saw either one, and during their visits would burst into fits of laughter, and that, too, when nothing was being said.

At first this merriment disturbed her two visitors somewhat, but they finally grew accustomed to it as they had to her chanting style of talking, and now rather liked the outbursts.

Buffington, however, was certain that he recognized signs of a decided preference for himself, and felt that much of Mandy's laughter sprang from a heart overflowing with happiness over the presence of love in her heart and the object of her devotion before her eyes. Then one day she told him something about Dan which convinced him

that he (Billy) was the favored man. On the other hand she confided something to Dan relative to Billy, which caused the Master of January to chuckle a good deal, not only then, but all that afternoon.

Such was the situation of affairs for some weeks, greatly to the benefit of the crops of both men, for they being somewhat suspicious and jealous of one another, the old time mutual visits were discontinued; and as love is said to drive one's chariot wheels, and they had no chariots, but plows, they actually did more and better plowing than they had since the first year of their renting, at which time they strove for a reputation for industry.

As Dan "broke out the middles" in the field, and saw the soft black earth turned into long beautiful ridges, it was a prophecy in figure to him of Mandy yielding to his steady advances; and in the swelling furrow, he could see the bosom of the girl heaving under the attentions and love he was softly and persistently throwing upon her.

Billy Buffington, in his rambles through the woods, or by the river or lake side with gun or fishing pole, had Mandy in his mind when he brought down a duck on the wing, or landed a glittering perch on the shore.

“I’ll bag her yet,” or “I’ll string her sure,” was his chuckling comment at the end of many a successful shot or haul. Sometimes it was “I Ganny, I’ve got her, or Bob Lee was no General.”

The attentions of the two Cronies to the damsel from the hills were not confined to sighs, glances and soft words, but there were actions of such a public nature as set many doubts at rest and at the same time many tongues agoing on Clear Lake. These ministries plainly indicated both the love and rivalry. Billy took Mandy to a barbecue on the Yazoo River, whereupon Dan escorted her to a fish fry on Honey Island. Billy treated her to a horse back ride to the hills, and Dan immediately retorted with a skiff row on Clear Lake by moonlight.

Neither did these labors of love end here, but developed in a still more material and profitable character. Billy sent in a string of fish; Dan brought a sack of sweet potatoes. Billy presented three wild ducks; Dan carried over a half dozen kershaws. Billy gave some squirrels; Dan followed suit with a bag of dried peaches.

So the tokens of remembrance and regard rained on Mandy to the improvement of her home larder, and the perfect satisfaction of Mr. Robinson, the father, who, as he ate these swamp delicacies, remarked at the table:

"I dunno, but I'd like to have about three sons-in-law, Mandy, if they'd all do like Bivings and Buffington."

"I expec'," replied Mandy, "they'd git no 'count after they got married."

Mr. Robinson winced under this speech as he was notoriously fond of sitting a long time in one place and allowing other people to do what properly belonged to him. Indeed it had been whispered around in the hills that Mrs. Robinson had sunk into the grave ahead of time, owing to Mr. Robinson having permitted her to perform her full quota of farm work and half of his own in addition. He was a forgetful kind of man about some things.

But to return to the Cronies' love affair; the climax was reached in Dan's case one day when Mandy taught him how to card cotton, and turn the bats into fleecy white rolls ready for the spinning wheel. Dan was all in a tremble when the girl bent over him with her warm breath on his cheek and showed him the mystery. He was slow to learn, as the teaching kept Mandy close by, but by and by, he mastered the art, although he felt quite foolish when Billy rode up and saw him sitting in the room busily at work with a pile of the transformed material in a chair before him.

Billy looked a little sulky at first over this home scene, but being naturally of a sunny disposition, he soon shot off his bosom gloom through his lips, in the shape of a few aerial bullets, and had the very next day the pleasure of holding a hank of yarn in his hands while Mandy rolled the thread on a ball, as it slipped from his agitated fingers.

Billy felt he could stay in such a position forever; for the task brought them very near together, and the thread would get into occasional tangles, causing Mandy's hand to come in contact with his as she strove with the knot, and sending magnetic thrills through him at every touch. He was not much of a praying man, but he most fervently hoped, if he did not supplicate, that there would be no end to the knots and no termination whatever to the thread of that hank which Mandy had hung on his outstretched palms and uplifted thumbs. Meanwhile his enchantress told him:

"He was the orkidest man she ever seen."

All of which delighted him, for a man in love enjoys being scolded in that kind of way by the object of his affection. She certainly played havoc with Billy that morning, for as she coiled the thread on the ball, she wound the love-sick Mississippian more than ever around herself.

"I Ganny," said the victim afterwards to him-

self, "she wrapped me 'round her finger that day good fashion, or Stonewall Jackson was no fighter."

During the days that Dan helped Mandy, or thought he helped her, in the carding of cotton, January gained ten pounds, and the grass in the Bivings' field grew almost as many inches.

As for Billy, after the hank and ball winding experience, he felt so soft-hearted and kind to everything that for days he had no desire to jerk a fish out of the water, or bring a bird or squirrel down from a tree with one of his unerring shots.

There was one thing, however, which puzzled both Dan and Billy, about Mandy, and that was, that more than once, and right in the midst of their most devoted attentions to her, she had asked them, as if coming out of a brown study:

"Do you know the Poorvall folks?"

She would say nothing more after the question, but look like she had something else to state, but either could not, or would not.

One morning, the very day of the hank and yarn ball incident, Mandy chanted out:

"Do you know the Poorvall folks, as lives on Big Black?"

"No," replied Billy. "Did you ever meet the Buffingtons of Virginia?"

As Mandy had been born and raised on Techeva Creek, and had never been over four miles from Yazoo County, there was a most refreshing needlessness in the query. Of course Mandy replied in the negative. Billy, in speaking about it afterwards to Dan, said:

“As sure as Stonewall Jackson was a fighter, I floored her, sir, with that question. This is the third time she has asked me about those Poorvall folks, as she calls them. But I saw her wince, and give in, when I mentioned the Buffingtons.”

“The Purvalls,” remarked Dan, “must be some punkins, for she has asked me a time or two if I knew ’em.”

“Well, sir,” replied Billy, shooting several minnie balls, “they may be some pumpkins but the Buffingtons is the horse that can swallow them and put them out of sight.”

“Yep,” answered Dan, with a pitchoo, “but punkins is too much for a horse sometimes.”

It was only a few days after, that Dan was making a short morning call on the Robinson family in general, and Mandy in particular. The girl was sitting in a low chair, on the puncheon floor gallery, knitting. A string of red pepper hung just over her head on the wall, together with two fishing poles and a yellow gourd near the water

pail on the shelf. A cat purred at her feet. In the sunshine a handsome red and gold-tinted rooster was escorting a dozen comely hens around in the front yard, and taking full time to show off his gorgeous dress, while a loud cackling in the back yard announced a new laid egg.

The domestic scene quite warmed Dan's heart; he felt that if Robinson and his two gawky boys, then sitting in the front room, could be wiped out of existence, he would like to step in that very morning, and then and there become the master and owner of everything in sight, especially of Mandy.

He had come down to tell her that Billy and himself were going away the next day to the head of Honey Island on a hunting and fishing excursion. He intended to watch her closely when he gave this information and see how the tidings would affect her. By her agitation or manifest pain he would get more light on the matter as to how much she returned the love which was glowing in his heart for her; so with a considerable quaver of anxiety in his voice, he said:

"Miss Mandy, after to-day you won't see me and Billy again for quite a while."

"Do say," sing-songed Mandy. "Whur you goin'?"

“Way up the river on a camp hunt. Gone a whole week.”

“Well, you mus’ take keer o’ yourself.”

“Shore,” replied Dan, and looked in vain for the sign of the iron entering her soul at the thought of separation. Perhaps it pierced too deep for human eyes, thought Dan. So he went through his three tobacco sounds, and steadily looking at her, waited for developments. Suddenly she seemed to be interested, put her head into a kind of reflecting position and said:

“Jim, ain’t that old Speck er cacklin’ out there in the gardin?”

“No,” promptly replied Jim, the younger brother. “Hits Ole Rumplus.”

“Sold again,” thought Dan, with a pitchoo. “But wimmin are cunnin’. They often feel more than they will admit and show. If Robinson and his two long legged boys would only go to the field where they belong, a fellow could say somethin’, and bring the boil to a head.”

So thus Dan inwardly fumed, but to no avail, as Robinson and his two boys had a resting fit on them that morning, and entertained no idea of departing to oblige their visitor or anybody else.

But for their presence, Dan saw how he could bring the whole matter of doubt into the realm

of certainty. He would ask Mandy, for instance, whether she would like him to bring her some bear meat; and if she said yes, then he would advance a step and offer her a ham of deer. If she still answered affirmatively, he would then softly beg for the privilege of bringing and giving himself to her. He was much struck with the plan. It was such a delicate, gradual approach, through the bear, then the deer, to himself. The deer pronounced gently and tenderly would prepare the way for the concluding offer.

But then there was Robinson and his two boys in the front room and in full ear shot, so what could he say? Did Robinson never have a courting match? Had his boys no sense?

While wondering what to do, Mandy raised her dark eyes from her knitting and said:

“Mr. Bivings, do you know the Poorvalls?”

Dan came very near saying, “Plague take the Purvalls,” but checked himself in time, while inwardly boiling over the situation and the question. Meantime his discomfort was increased by hearing Robinson and his gosling sons snickering inside the room. What in the name of all the Bivings in South Carolina was that lazy, good-for-nothing Joe Robinson and his two long legged boys laughing about?

Mandy seemed to be on the point of speaking again, when Billy came riding up, and Dan went away.

III

A GREAT SURPRISE

The camp hunt was over, and the hunters scattered to their different homes loaded with the spoils of the chase.

Billy concluded to return on the western bank of the Yazoo in order to see a friend, while Dan crossed a river ferry and came homeward on a more direct route. He was in a tremor to see Mandy. He felt that he could not go to his own cabin until he had beheld his charmer of the spinning wheel, and red calico dress. So skirting the fields to keep his mother from seeing him, and taking a circuitous course through the woods, he came up on the opposite side of the Robinson home. He had a gunny sack well filled with game, a goodly portion being for Mandy. According to previous design he had a piece of bear meat, a venison ham, and a duck; the last being a final happy thought. He intended watching her face

closely when the gifts were presented, and if she did not soften when he offered the venison with the word deer softly and significantly pronounced, he would then pull out the fowl and ask her to be his duck.

As he rode up toward the dwelling his mind filled with these thrilling delicious thoughts, he was astonished to find it silent and desolate. The yard partook of the solitariness of the building, not a sign of life being seen anywhere. The whole place was as if stripped by a cyclone.

Hitching January at the fence, Dan walked up the yard, through the open door into the empty house. Not a soul was to be seen. Not a stick of furniture was left. The very floor had been swept clean. Walking out to the front gallery the eye noticed that the strings of red pepper, fishing poles, yellow gourd, and bucket were all gone.

With a sickening sensation, Dan sat down on the steps and wondered what made the world look so empty. A blue jay was screaming in the woods in front, and a woodpecker was solemnly tapping on the dead limb of a large tree near by. It seemed to Dan that the jay was crying out, "Mandy," "Mandy," while the woodpecker was driving nails in a coffin up in the air. The man sat wondering and heartsick nearly an hour on the steps of the forsaken home, when Billy Buf-

fington suddenly appeared on his gray in the road.

"Hello, the house," he cried as he reached the gate.

"Light," said Dan.

"Where is your wife and family?"

"Gone a visitin'," replied Dan with a face so solemn that Billy at once changed his bantering tone.

"Where's the folks," he asked, coming up the walk.

"Dunno," answered Dan, with a squirt of tobacco.

"Well, well, well," ejaculated Billy, as he walked through the silent yard, up on the empty porch, peeped into the vacant rooms, and finally took his seat on the wash shelf.

"What does all this mean, Dan? Where is Mandy and all the rest?"

"How do I know? I found the house empty like you see it."

Billy gave a long, low whistle, worked his lips a moment, and sent a wind ball toward the yard.

Dan gave a squashing sound.

Billy sent another bullet into the air.

At this juncture, Major Ellerton, who was riding by, stopped at the gate and asked them with a laugh and a sly look if they were examining the premises with a view of renting.

The Cronies were too low spirited to return the Major's jocular remark. They, however, advanced to him, and leaning on the fence, were soon put in possession of the following facts, Billy, meanwhile, shooting many a minnie ball as the story proceeded, and Dan going through his three tobacco sounds not less than a dozen times.

It seemed that the girl had been engaged all the time to a man named Purvall, a young farmer living on Big Black. Purvall had promised his father on his death bed that he would not marry while his mother was living. The mother, quite an invalid, and demanding much of the son's attention, had suddenly died a week before and the young man had come down for his betrothed immediately after the funeral. Mr. Robinson had found another tenant on Major Ellerton's place, who consented to take his crop and lease off his hand, and the whole family had packed up and gone away with Purvall, only stopping in Yazoo City long enough to get married, and by this time had been in their home on Big Black fully two days.

At the end of the recital, for a full minute no sound was heard, but the shooting of minnie balls by Billy, and a sound from Dan, which might well have stood for the gushing of blood. Buffington stood looking at the waves of Clear Lake, which

could be seen across the field, and Dan had his eyes fixed on the swamp. The men were evidently so deeply hurt, that Major Ellerton, who was a man of real delicacy of feeling, as well as kindness of heart, considerably rode away, with a pleasant smile and a cordial good-bye.

After a while Billy said:

“Sold.”

“You bet,” was Dan’s solemn reply.

“I see now,” added Billy, “what she meant by always asking us if we knew the Purvalls.”

“Uh-hunh,” grunted Dan.

“Mercy on me, where’s the fool-killer? I’m ready for him,” groaned Billy, letting three minnie balls fly in rapid succession.

Dan only pitchooed in reply.

“To think,” continued Billy, “of a Buffington going down before a Robinson. Of a man who fought under Bob Lee, flanked and outgenerated by a girl in calico, hailing from the piney woods.”

“I’m sorry for Purvall,” broke in Dan, looking up at the woodpecker, who was still at work on the aerial coffin.

“Yes, sir,” put in Billy; “and so am I. She will fool him yet, just like she did—well—I Gan-ny! Purvall will yet call himself Poorvall before that girl is done with him.”

After some more unburdening of heart loads

by way of speech, air balls and expectoration in general, the two Cronies parted, taking different directions toward their homes.

Now, some men under similar circumstances of disappointed love have been known to commit suicide, others to leave the country forever, and still others have taken to morphine or the whisky bottle; but let the reader note how different was the conduct of our two heroes from all such; and yet also how dissimilarly they acted from each other.

Billy went on a bear hunt for a week, and came back loaded down with fresh wild meat. He had parted with a good deal of his agony in the woods. Every time he shot he felt better, and when he finally had a tussle with a wounded bear, he said that he worked off on the animal some of the bad feelings which had gathered against Purvall, so that at last he felt he could return home.

Dan went to Yazoo City. He might have gotten drunk and careered around his neighborhood, like a wild Indian, but instead he took a day's trip to the county seat. It is true that the visit ended in a spree, but he explained afterwards that he did not so intend. His idea had been to meet some of his street corner tobacco friends and relieve himself conversationally and socially of some of his misery; but the sight of a number of

stylishly dressed women on the street revived the memory of Mandy, and before he knew it, he had taken a half dozen drinks, the color had run the entire length of his nose, and Dan, in high feather, was ready for home.

He found the faithful January in the dusty lot among the jimson weeds and dog fennel. He next tied with unsteady hands on the back of his saddle a bundle containing fifteen yards of calico for his mother. Some one saw him five minutes later coming up Main street, and turning the corner of Jefferson, with his beard divided on his shoulders, his eyes set, his nose aflame, January rising and falling in what was intended to be a gallop, and the entire bolt of calico streaming in the wind behind. Both mule and rider were serenely unconscious of their comet-like appearance, and were last seen bearing off in a northeasterly direction toward Clear Lake. Fortunately for old Mrs. Bivings, the tail of the comet was at last gathered up; the nucleus in the shape of Dan and his mule reaching home between ten and eleven o'clock. The maternal salutation was:

“Is that you, Dan’el?”

“Yep, mother.”

“Drunk again, I reckon?” was the rejoinder.

Whereupon, taking a candle she held it high over her head as she stood in the doorway and

inspected her belated son. The nose was red from end to end. This meant that the bed was all that was needed, and so to bed he went, and in five minutes certain stertorous sounds declared that Dan had forgotten all his sorrows. Meanwhile the mother before the fireplace examined and brushed the tail of one comet at least, which had come so nigh the world as to bear off with it a great quantity of mud.

It was fully two weeks before Dan and Billy felt able to meet each other. There was not only the pain of past associations and memories, but the fact that each had tried to get ahead of the other in winning the hand and heart of the damsel, caused some embarrassing anticipations at the very thought of the other's presence.

This state of things, however, was a benediction to their crops; for what was left of the pangs of disappointed love, Dan endeavored to work off in his furrows, and Billy did the same, with the added help of shooting ducks in the morning and squirrels in the afternoon. But the old friendship was too strong for a long separation, and so at last Billy received a message from Dan to "Come and see him and bring his dinner along." This was the very height of a cordial invitation, and in due time Billy arrived. For the first few minutes there was naturally a little stiffness and

awkwardness, with some facial performances not put down in books of oratory, rhetoric and the like; but after Billy had shot five or six minnie balls and Dan had gone through his tobacco sounds twice, and said "Yep," "Yah," "You bet" and "Shore," the two human streams came together again and flowed on amicably as of yore. They even attempted a little guying of each other, as follows:

"Dan, what made you ever imagine that Mandy loved you?"

"For the same reason," fired back Dan, "that you fancied she loved you."

"She never cared for you like she did for me, Dan. She had a different feeling for me than she did for you."

"Yep," replied Dan, "and she had a different feeling for Purvall, it seems, than she had for you."

Billy winced under this retort, but went on:

"This affair has greatly softened my nature. It is making a man out of me. It is really a golden sorrow to me."

"I don't see either gold, silver, or bank notes in it myself," was Dan's dry rejoinder.

"Dan," returned Billy, "I see there is nothing of the poetic or the sentimental about you. I was speaking figuratively of course. The Buffingtons

of Virginia, were people of a cultured and poetic nature."

"I'll stake," broke in Dan, "the Bivings of South Carolina, against the whole world for the high bred and correct thing in all matters."

"The fact is," said Billy, paying no attention to Dan, "I have inherited a great deal of the Bufington's taste and ability for poetry. Did I ever tell you about my writing some sonnets and odes for the papers?"

"Dunno that you did," answered Dan with a bored look.

"Well, I did, and this sorrow has revived my dormant gifts and I have begun a poem called 'Lines to Mandy.' I have written one verse already, and expect to write three more with a refrain to each verse."

"If I were you," replied Dan, with a twinkle in his eye, "I would make the whole thing a refrain."

"Now, look here, Dan Bivings, if you intend that for a joke, I hope Heaven will forgive you, for I can't; the thing is too poor to live, much less to forgive. But would you really like to hear what I have written?"

"Shore," returned Dan, taking a big bite off his tobacco plug in order to fortify himself.

Billy solemnly removed a leathern wallet from

his inside pocket and with careful hands extracted a sheet of letter paper which, as he unfolded, revealed the caption and a solitary stanza near the top. Billy sat down on a stump, and after firing a few minnie balls into space, proceeded to read with proper melodramatic voice the following lines, with Dan looking over his shoulder:

LINES TO MANDY ROBINSON

The partridge whistles for its mate,
The lonely dove mourns from the pine,
The black bird
And Mandy Rob'son is not mine.

"Why don't you end that third line?" asked Dan.

"Well" replied Billy, scratching the back of his head so as to tilt his hat over his forehead, "I can't find a rhyme for mate. There is plate, skate, grate, late, and fate, but none of them will do. I stayed awake half a night trying to fix up that third line, but it's a goner. It's no use going to the second verse till I get this one fixed up."

"Can't you make the black bird line end with sitting on the gate?" suggested Dan, sympathetically.

“No;” replied Billy, “there would be no sense or appropriateness in that.”

Dan sent about a gill of ambia to the ground, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and said with the air of one who had solved a great problem:

“Change your bird.”

“Oh, that won’t do,” snapped Billy. “There’s nothing the matter with the black bird; it’s an appropriate rhyme to mate I want and can’t get. I tried a half night, I tell you, and it won’t come.”

“Yep, I see,” returned Dan. “But it won’t do to leave the thing like it is, for it reads now that ‘The black bird and Mandy Rob’son is not mine,’ that is that two things don’t belong to you, Mandy and the black bird.”

“Well,” answered Billy weariedly, “it’s got to stay that way until I get a rhyme for mate that will meet the demands of the poem.”

Dan still continued to look over Billy’s shoulder at the embryo poem with an occasional “pitchoo” in the air. Finally he spoke:

“Billy, what makes you cut up Mandy’s last name that way and call it Rob’son?”

“That,” replied Billy, “is to put the regular number of feet in the last line. I studied that kind of thing the year I was in college.”

“Well, why don’t you take some of your extry

feet out of your last line and put 'em in the third line with the black bird?"

"Dan Bivings," interjected Billy, "you know as much about poetry as a woodpecker does about the Fourth of July."

Whereupon, taking the precious manuscript and, returning it tenderly to the leathern wallet, and that receptacle to his pocket, he made a minnie ball, fired it into the air and stood with folded arms looking in a meditative way at a distant gleaming vision of Clear Lake.

IV

MORE SURPRISES AND THE END

A couple of weeks later the Cronies met again. With a fortnight's flight of time they had softened still more, and felt kindlier to Mandy and even peaceably to Purvall; anyhow they thought so.

"It is a beautiful recollection," said Billy. "A picture to hang upon the walls of memory."

"A sockdologer," said Dan.

"I'm glad I ever met her," continued Billy.

"Me, too," replied Dan.

"She was a fine girl," Billy went on, "considering her station in life."

"Yep," said Dan; "a sweet creature."

"I can't for my life see how you ever got it into your head that she loved you, Dan."

"Well, if you will force me to explain, I will say this, that whenever I was there she could never take her eyes off me. A man would be a fool not to see something in conduct like this."

"Why, Dan," said Billy, bursting into a big laugh, "do you know what she told me about that? She said that your nose literally fascinated her. That she never saw a nose in all her life that interested her as much. She said sometimes it

made her laugh, and then again she felt sad, for it reminded her of the sunset. She said your beard stood for the clouds and your nose for the setting sun."

"Did she say that?" broke in Dan with an angry "pitchoo."

"She did, or Bob Lee was no general. Do you remember the day she whispered something to me by the water shelf? Well, that was it. I Ganny, it is so."

"Well, dad fetch her Hoosier hide of her. I hope Purvall will live to beat the life out of her."

For several minutes after this stormy declaration Dan did nothing but fume, blow, squirt, pitchoo, and talk about the lightning striking tar heels and tallow faces.

"Don't take it so hard, Dan," said Billy, consolingly. "Don't take it so hard. You ought to be glad that you furnished some entertainment to her."

Dan said nothing to this as he slowly ruminated on his weed. Suddenly a light flashed into his eyes.

"Look here, Billy, what make you think she cared for you? Now, honest Injun. Tell the truth and shame the devil. Own up, as I did."

"Well," answered Billy, after firing a couple of minnie balls, "I judged it from several things,

but mainly from the fact that whenever I would leave her she would follow me with her eyes, and even come after me across the room, upon the gallery, and into the yard. It was at first a little embarrassing, but finally became pleasant."

At this Dan fairly fell over against the fence where they were talking while his whoops sent a rabbit flying out of a clump of bushes to the woods. Billy's eyes contracted and expanded, and at last with considerable dignity he demanded an explanation.

"Wait," said Dan, "till I get my breath. Well, ha!—ha!—ha!—How will I ever get it out—Billy, old boy, she told me she wouldn't miss seeing you pucker your mouth and shoot your air bullets for pay. She said a circus with a clown and monkey all throw'd in wasn't equal to you with your mouth draw'd up to shoot and one of your eyes squinted as if you was taking aim at something."

This was the longest speech that Dan had ever been known to make, and it was certainly effective. Billy's eyes looked like he had borrowed a pair of Saturn's rings.

"Dan Bivings, do you solemnly swear that she said that?"

"May I drop dead in my tracks, if she didn't."

There was a long silence between the men, in which Billy fired more minnie balls to the minute

than he had even been known to do before. It seemed also from the force with which they were projected, that he was aiming at somebody on Big Black.

Finally he turned to Dan, with withering sarcasm in his voice, and said:

“She was far below our station.”

“Shore,” replied Dan.

“Nothing but a giggling ignoramus,” added Billy.

“Tallow faced at that,” said Dan.

“She was a whining, drawling Tar-heel,” pursued Billy hotly.

“A back-woods hussy,” said Dan.

“I’m glad Purvall got her,” snapped Billy.

“Me, too,” said Dan.

Then followed a duel between the two men of minnie ball firing and the blood gushing sound. At last, with a look upon his face as if he was settling the most important of matters, Billy said:

“If I had married her the Buffingtons of Virginia would never have lifted up their heads again.”

“The Bivings, of South Carolina,—” commenced Dan.

“I am certainly sorry for Purvall,” interposed Billy.

"Me, too," said Dan.

The Cronies walked on together down the road after these fierce speeches, and stopped involuntarily before the empty Robinson cabin which fronted the bayou and swamp. The evening was coming on. A few locusts were at their drowsy song in the trees as if sorrowing over the absence of Mandy, and the house and yard looked dark and desolate.

The men stood gazing silently for a few minutes at the empty nest whose song bird had flown, and then with a parting grasp of the hand, they separated. Both turned their faces homeward, and both in spite of their defiant words, were weak and sick at heart for a sing-song voiced country girl in red calico, who that very instant was supremely happy on Big Black with Tom Purvall, another man.

Dan sat in front of his humble home which looked upon the woods, and listened until long after nightfall to the melancholy chanting of the frogs in the willow lined marsh. His late conversation with Billy had revived the partially buried past, and torn apart the wound that had begun to heal. He refused the supper to which he was repeatedly summoned by his mother, and remained silent in the dark. The only sound coming through the open door to the waiting woman was the soft

rustling of the corn which grew close to the cabin, or the "pitchoo" of her grieving son which came as regularly out of the night shadows as if timed by a watch.

Billy also stationed himself by his cabin door and pensively contemplated Clear Lake as it lay quiet and beautiful before him. He saw it crimson in the sunset, then pale and darken as his hopes had done, while the forest on the opposite side became gloomy and spectral and sighed as though in pain. But still the man sat with his chin resting on his hand as he gazed upon the glimmering sheet of water.

By and by the owls began their usual night concert across the lake. One was particularly vociferous as he called out, according to the negro translation:

"I cooks for myself,
Who cooks for you all?"

"Why," laughed Billy, "that is poetry. Anyhow it is part of a verse and I'll finish it for him the next time he says it."

In another minute from across the lake came the owl hoot:

"I cooks for myself,
Who cooks for you all?"

Billy sprang to his feet and putting his hands to his mouth like a trumpet, he shouted back:

“I cooks for myself,
And Mandy for Purvall.”

The cry echoed back from the other side, and went reverberating up the dark wooded shore with faint, and fainter repetitions, “Mandy for Purvall,” “Mandy for Purvall,” until at a distant bend of the lake it could just be heard, “Mandy for Purvall,”—and then all was still.

The owl was silenced, but so was his interrupter. The momentary fun was all gone out of Billy, and sitting down on a wooden bench before his lonely cabin, he, the strong man who boasted of the Buffington family pride and said he was glad Purvall had the girl he loved, buried his face in his hands and wept great, bitter, scalding tears in the starlight.

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